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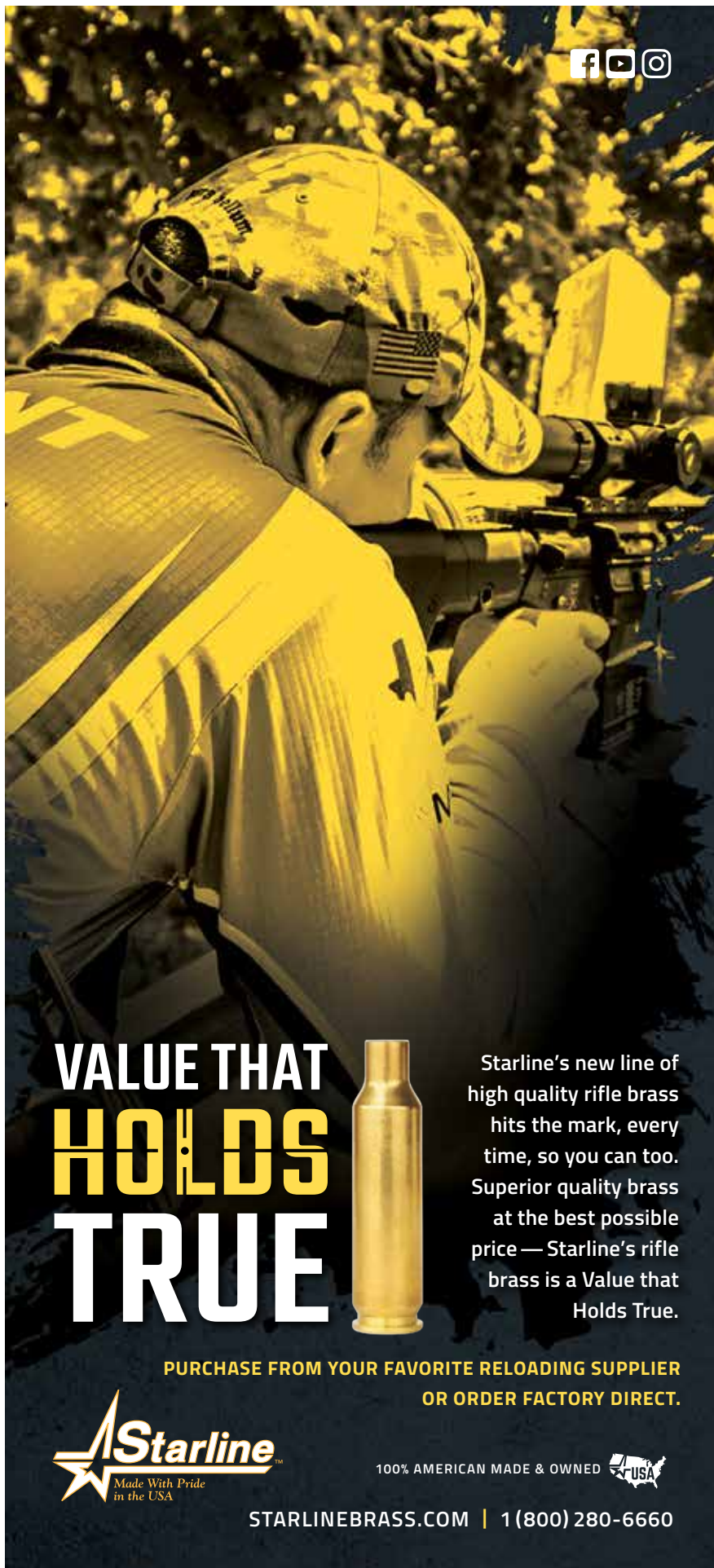
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The cover on the latest *AH* of an SAA took me back to the early '90s. I saw another *AH* cover with a beautiful CCH SAA in all its glory. Bought the mag right then. Inside was a great article by John Taffin on SAAs. It made me want one. Now I have six plus one New Frontier in .44 S&W. I want to thank whoever decided to put Duke's gun 'ritings in that one book. It has enabled me to catch up on Mike's articles that I missed before I became a regular reader and subscriber. I have gone through it more than once and enjoyed it more each time. The reader who wrote that he lost a good friend whom he never met spoke for a lot of us. Great magazine!! Great 'riters!! Great Editor!!

William Jones



Bud Ballew

I enjoyed your article in the Nov/Dec *The Ayoob Files* on Sheriff Buck Garret and Deputy Bud Ballew. It brought back fond memories of my father and his brother telling of their meeting with the two Oklahoma lawmen in Ardmore, Okla., during the Hamon/Smith trial.

My grandfather was W.P. McLean, a prominent Fort Worth attorney.

He defended Clara Smith, who was accused of shooting her husband, Jake Hamon, a prominent oil king and potential political power. He was successful in Clara Smith's defense with the closing argument, "Give them their oil wells ... but not one drop of this fine woman's blood."

My father tells the story of how he and his brother, young boys at the time,

played cards with Sheriff Garret and Deputy Ballew during the trial, saying both men were very friendly and nice.

I have a .22 derringer that was given to me by my mother, claiming it was the gun that killed Hamon, although I haven't researched the firearm's history, I doubt this derringer is in fact the murder weapon. The derringer is in very poor condition. If, during your research






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on the Ballew article, you ran across the identity of the murder weapon used in the Hamon murder, it would be nice to verify if the derringer is, in fact, part of this history.

Another interesting story about my grandfather. A woman in Amarillo, Texas, wired my grandfather \$10,000, saying she was accused of killing her husband and asking if he would defend her. My grandfather wired back, "I am on my way with two eyeball witnesses."

J. Allan McLean

Interesting Leather

Years ago, I was given an original Colt 1851 that was manufactured in 1861. It came in a holster that was stamped Freund Bros on the front. But the letters go from right to left and are reversed which is very odd. The Freund Brothers were gunsmiths and had gun shops in Denver, Cheyenne, Laramie and Salt Lake City. I have attached photos of the holster. I thought this might interest you. Thanks for your time.

Bill Wallace



Bill asked for a forward to Bob Arganbright, which we will do, but this seemed interesting and I thought all y'all might enjoy the photo. —TM

Guns & Water Moccasins

Will, William, Bill, [Dabbs]: Anyhow, that's far enough. Howdy! Or how are y'all?

I enjoy your articles, they're always good for a chuckle, like "Smarties" (*Guncrank Diaries*, Online), who knew?

Just read your article on your new EDC, the Shadow System's CR920XP pistol. Nice handgun for you youngsters that like the "plastic fantastic" type pistols. No doubt that's a high-quality piece, priced a little above average, but then, what's your life worth if you need to use it?

Cars are similar; I'd rather drive an Acura, BMW, or Genesis than a Chevy Cobalt, or even my five-year-old Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited (low miles on this baby!).

However, when it comes to reliability, concealability, and accuracy, this new high-end offering from Shadow Systems should realistically

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SPEAK OUT

be compared to the new Ruger RXM. Totally new for Ruger; eschews many of the same attributes as the pricier SS CR920XP. So, is the Ruger just as good? Would you carry it every day?

These are questions that should/might/could be answered in the interest of objective reporting of gun-related news. Just sayin'.

With Best Regards,
Paul W. Betz

P.S. I look forward to your next foray into the realm of humorous, absurd, little-known world of W. Dabbs.

P.P.S. Do you really shoot water moccasins with an AR?

Good On SIG!

When I receive excellent customer service these days, it doesn't go unnoticed or unappreciated. In an era of automated customer service, endless phone pad selections, insufferable "music" playing during endless waiting on the line, and overseas call centers with accents as thick as molasses, it is nice to place a call to a company and have an English-speaking red-blooded

American answer the phone with a minimum of prompts. Not only that, the said CSR then promptly addresses your problem. Such was the case when I recently called SIG customer service to inquire about repairing my SIG Romeo RDS. The sight was damaged when some questionable ammunition had a catastrophic failure in my P320X. The ruptured case launched the extractor and loaded chamber indicator and damaged the RDS. I called SIG, explained my situation, and in minutes, I had an RA and a prepaid return label. A few weeks later, they did not return a repaired sight but an entirely new sight. Now I don't care who you are, that right there is the best customer service anyone could ask for. And that is why I am a SIG fan. This summer, my sojourn to New England will include a stop at "The SIG Experience" in Epping, NH.

Donald Albracht

Get The Lead Out!

My current dilemma has to do with the GLOCK polygonal barrel. I have heard that drop-in barrels for GLOCKS can be purchased with standard rifling, which will permit shooting cast and plated bullets with none of the ill effects as those described in the

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GLOCK manual, leading, etc. However, I have made several calls, including to GLOCK, Brownells, The GLOCK Store and True Precision, as well as a couple of others with no success. My interest in securing such a barrel was motivated by comments on the internet.

I would greatly appreciate it if you can tell me if such a barrel exists or not, and if so, where it might be obtained. I have also heard that lead and plated bullets will not cause a problem with GLOCK barrels as long as proper cleaning procedures are followed and velocity is kept below a certain level. Your comments on this issue will be greatly appreciated.

Bill

Hi Bill, there's some truth to this. Polygonal barrels can be susceptible to leading in certain cases. The challenge is that the issue seems to be inconsistent. It's a more pronounced problem in some barrels with some loads but not others. We can't recommend you shoot lead from polygonal-rifled barrels, as I think GLOCK still advises against it. However, a lot of people do, using hardcast bullets at moderate velocities. It definitely falls in the "at your own risk" category and will likely void any warranty. If you do it, watch for signs of leading! The safe bet, as you say, is to just use a traditionally rifled drop-in barrel. Lots of companies make them. Try LoneWolfDist.com and KKMPrecision.com for starters. Good luck with your search! —TM

Radom P-35 Stock

I am looking for a diagram for the shoulder stock for the Radom P35, VZ 35. Yes, it does have the slot in the grip. Please let me know where I may find this?

Frederick

I sent Frederick a couple of links that might shed light on this and suggested he check out potential legal issues first, but that's from an abundance of caution as I don't know. Can any of you gurus out there shed light on the subject? I'll be happy to either forward info to Frederick or connect you. —TM

Planes

It's not a gun, but history is good. How about turning one of your walleys experts loose on the history of Russian planes from WWII? Don't know how you could justify it, but you've got the best tale spinners of all.

George

Well, George, I'm with ya as I am a certified plane nut also, especially concerning those of the WWII variety. I most certainly would take some flak (Ha! See what I did there?) if I published a story

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about airplanes in a magazine titled American Handgunner. However... Maybe I can talk one of our story gurus into exploring something tangentially related, like handguns of the Russian pilots of WWII? Who knows, maybe an airplane or two might show up in the background of some of the photos? —TM

Schofields

Clint Eastwood's masterful *Unforgiven* (1992) features the Schofield Kid (Jaimz Woolvett) and his pursuit of the "whores gold" or to kill men for money. Sheriff Little Bill Daggett (RIP Gene

Hackman), as the main antagonist, sees things differently. William Munny (Clint) sums it up best, "It's a hell of a thing, killin' a man. Take away all he's got, and all he's ever gonna have" ...

Regards,
DJ McNamara

Women

The other mistake a great many men make in teaching is just as described in the article — they have to show the little woman just how manly they are by starting out with a rip-snorting magnum handgun. Even

SPEAK OUT

a .357 Magnum shooting regular .357 cartridges is a handful for someone without great hand strength, and the thunderous roar it makes as the cartridge is ignited is intimidating to someone not accustomed to the loud noise. I always start a newbie off with a .22 revolver. It needs to be a fun session. You want them to get used to the bang, cocking the hammer is an extra step that most newbies like to do and generally the trigger is easy to depress

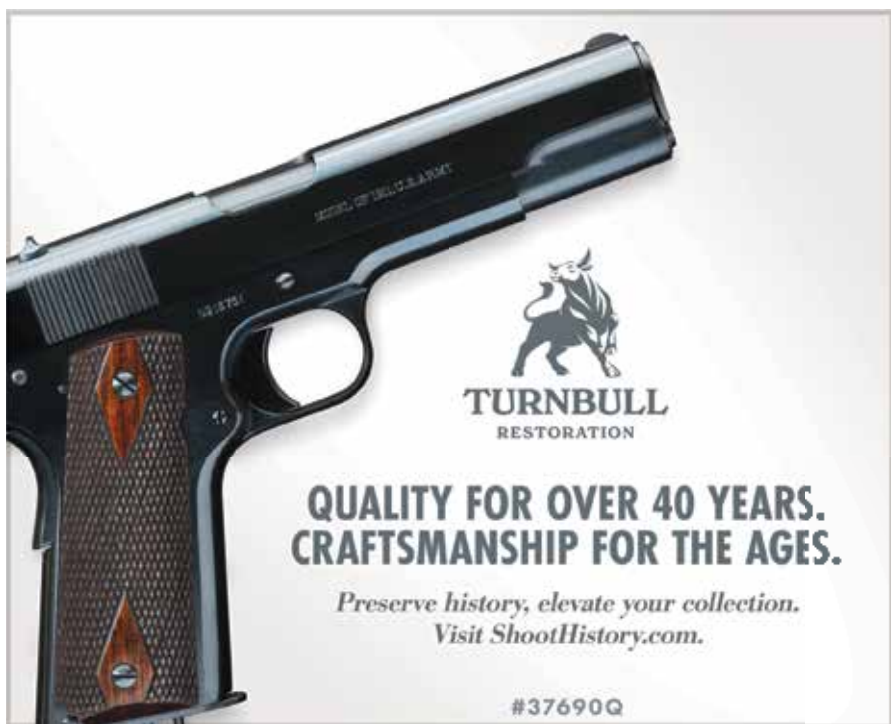
without a lot of pressure and a short trigger travel before letting off. After they get interested in continuing, I then switch to a .38 Special because it isn't as big as most .357 Magnums and we shoot light load wadcutters. Not much more bang than a .22, and a nice big hole to see where the shooter hit the target. There is always time to get the full power .38 or 9mm and to move up later on if deemed desirable.

No! You don't start out with a .38 snubbe because it is a "Lady's Gun." Unless my student is insistent on starting out with his or her .38 snubbe and I always point out the simple math

that a 1/4" muzzle movement on a 1½" barrel is a bigger arc of movement than it is on a 6" barrel and thus unless they are Dead Eye Dick, in which case why are they taking lessons from me, why aren't they at Thunder Ranch or some other more experienced shooting school? They will shoot better with a longer barrel and with less potent rounds with a sidearm with which I am totally familiar, where it shoots and therefore can correct their errors, which are making themselves perfectly clear on the target.

Women, in my opinion, make better students than men. After all, the men are Americans and that is all one needs to be Dead Eye Dick II. All American men know how to handle and shoot handguns with incredible accuracy. It's in their blood. I believe it has been scientifically established that women generally have better hand-eye coordination than men, so lots of times, without a significant amount of good training, they are shooting better than hubby, which some men can't handle. My sister-in-law was the top silhouette shooter in our club, not top woman, top shooter. She was pig hunting with my brother, and the guide had made a couple snide remarks about "the lady hunter." A pig broke cover, and the guide shouted to shoot it. My sister-in-law said, "Where?" The guide replied to shoot it in the eye. My sister-in-law fired, and when they approached the animal, the guide exclaimed in astonished tones, "You shot it in the eye." My sister-in-law shut him up for the rest of the hunt with "Well, that's where you told me to shoot it." She admitted to my brother later on that it actually was a lucky shot, although she was aiming for the head.

Chuck Voigtsberger



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Compact Pistols

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Well ... It IS an external hammer gun, so it's about half the way there ...

I totally refuse to carry any striker/concealed hammer gun concealed, nor will I carry an external hammer gun cocked. I don't trust safeties, like any mechanical device, they can fail to function.

Yes, light rails and red dots are nice ... but they add a lot of bulk and weight for deep conceal IWB. And also, just like any electrical device, it can fail at inopportune times. Giving up a rear sight in exchange for a red dot is for me, an unacceptable tradeoff.

Agree that the capacity is good. But it still is only a single-action, and the trigger dangle leaves me cold.

You know, S&W had a wonderful auto back in the day. It was called The Model 59. It was an external hammer [design], had a nice DA/SA trigger that felt a lot like a revolver,

14+1 rounds of 9MM on tap. And as I'm sure you are aware, there are also others, like the Beretta PX4 series, the old Tanfoglio (EAA Witness) and the Sarsilmaz K2 45C, which was also formerly by EAA.

Anyway, just some of my thoughts.

Jim Brown

Fun For Us Older Folks

Okay guys, I just came back from the gun range at Gator Guns with two of my favorite guns. And I have to tell ya. Today I shot my Taurus model 689, .357 Magnum revolver using Sellier & Bellot .38 Special 148-grain wadcutters. And my Walther WMP .22 Magnum using CCI ammo. I use a Handi-Rack on this gun. With this type of ammo, both guns are like shooting regular .22 LR ammo.

I'm 88 years young with rheumatoid arthritis. I go target shooting almost every week and enjoy the sport.

M.R. Meyerson

Go Fetch!

I have a lot of friends who play golf — a lot. One is even the coach of a high school golf team. I respect their hobby, and because they are my friends, I have a good handle on golf terminology.

I try to follow the advice never to “yuck” another’s “yum,” but I can’t help thinking golf is a lot like playing fetch without a dog.

I have friends who have pursued the elusive hole-in-one their entire adult lives. However, when I go to the range, I make a hole in something with every stroke (of the trigger, that is).

Wouldn't it be nice if just a few of those 16,752 golf courses were shooting ranges instead?

Scott Morris

John Taffin

I recently saw the tribute you and Brent Wheat did for John Taffin (*GUNS Magazine* Podcast); very well done. He will be missed. But thank God for the 85 years He did give John and for the shooting, hunting and writing talents that He gave him. I started reading John in the '80s in *American Handgunner*. I have all of John's books, which I highly recommend to everyone. The only caution I'll mention is it won't take long after cracking the cover of any of his books, especially the ones with the color photos, that you'll want to buy more guns. And it might take a while to get through the 400, to 500, to 600 pages.

To answer your question, yes, I reload .45 ACP with black powder. I shoot these loads in my Bond Arms Roughneck

derringer — a real hoot. The load: 140-grain Hornady .454" lead round ball, 1.7-grains of Titegroup against the flashhole, 15.3-grains of FFFG BP on top of that, compressed down to 0.917" OAL. Any LP primer will do. The void between the case mouth and the ball is filled with bullet lube, a homemade blend of 50-50 pure yellow beeswax and olive oil, which keeps the fouling soft. There's lots of smoke, and the small amount of smokeless powder (no more than 10% of the total 17.0g powder charge) makes cleanup a little easier.

I look forward to reading the rest of John's yet-to-be-published articles.

Stay well and keep *American Handgunner* coming.

Regards,
Vito DeAngelis

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Interesting things come from South Carolina. You know, like shrimp and grits, bowties, occasional secession and unusual accents that soothe your ear like a warm blanket. It's a friendly place now the whole "seceding from the Union" thing is in the rear view mirror.

Here in Charleston, the long-time mayor used to wander the streets, offering help and directions to tourists. The funny part is, he never let on who he was. In fact, once a national morning show crew was in town doing a piece on friendliest cities and ran into him. They didn't know who he was either, as he offered them directions to wherever they were headed. The news team figured it out the next day during their scheduled interview with ... the Mayor. The state shares similar attributes. A previous Governor started a lovely tradition of having state agency employees answer phones with, "It's always a great day in South Carolina! How can I help you?" Truer words have "nuhvuhh" been spoken — lots of people here live their values for all to see.

As for being a firearms-friendly state, South Carolina ranks respectably, too. Consider Palmetto State Armory firearms. The company stretched its legs some years ago, making and selling AR-platform rifles at a value price point. People loved the products and bought them by the truckload. Soon, PSA was in the export business, at least to other states through the wholesale and FFL dealer networks.

Even more recently, the Palmetto State Armory folks began making their own line of pistols. I've been tinkering with one simply called ... the Rock.

Small And Fast

The Rock 5.7 is, as the name implies, chambered in 5.7x28mm. I'm cheering, mainly because I'm enamored with goofball calibers. Actually, that's not fair, 5.7x28mm is not a goofball caliber. It's used by serious people for serious reasons. For us, more recreational users, let's call it fun and interesting.

If you're not hands-on familiar with the 5.7x28mm, the basic idea is to shrink down a bottlenecked rifle cartridge to about half or quarter size and use it in a carbine like the PS90 or even a pistol.

Think small and very, very fast projectiles. The common bullet weight is just 40 grains (the standard weight for a .22 LR), and even from a pistol like the Rock 5.7, they're respectably close to Mach 2 in muzzle velocity. I clocked them hovering around the 1,800 fps mark.

Back in the late '90s, FN launched the Five-sevenN, and while the embers of success took a while to ignite, they eventually flared and now other companies like Ruger, Kel-Tec, Smith & Wesson and Palmetto State Armory make their own versions.

What's In A Rock?

The Rock 5.7 is a striker-fired design, configured for an accuracy-enabling trigger press. Using a Lyman Digital Trigger Gauge, I measured it at an average of just about 4 lbs., 1 oz. over lots of pulls. It's got nice, constant takeup, and considering the price point, is surprisingly serviceable. I'll keep this one as is — no need to invest extra in trigger upgrades or gunsmithing.

Unlike other 5.7 pistol designs, this one appears and feels far less oblong and blocky. Those 5.7x28mm cartridges are longer than most handgun calibers, so the grips tend to be stretched front to back. Not so obvious with the Rock. The pistol looks and feels nice and "normal" for a handgun.

Capacity is ... generous at 23 rounds, not counting the extra in the chamber. Too bad the ammo is on the pricier side,



The PSA Rock performed admirably with four types of 5.7x28mm ammo. Somehow, the grip doesn't appear as "stretched" as that of other 5.7 pistols.



at least for now, as this is one fun pistol to shoot. Recoil is non-existent, but you will hear the noise from those down-sized bottleneck cartridges.

Rock Performance

As for accuracy? From 25 yards, three types of supersonic ammo (American Eagle, Fiocchi Tipped Hollow Point and FN SS197SR V-Max) produced five-shot groups of 2.0", 1.6" and 1.75". Since my sample pistol was optics-ready, I mounted a Trijicon RCR up top and used a Ransom Multi-Caliber Rest to steady things on the bench. With that setup, I'm convinced I removed most of the "shooter variability" from the accuracy testing equation.

Because many of you folks are gearheads like me, I'll also include the velocity figure measured with the Garmin Doppler Radar chronograph.

Those three supersonic ammo types averaged 1,691.6, 1,790.3 and 1,802.9 fps, respectively. Fast, huh?

The Fiocchi Range Dynamics Subsonic (986 fps) produced 2.1" groups in the same test. And yes, I did all shooting with a SilencerCo Sparrow suppressor. Because ... fun. While the supersonic loads still made some noise, mostly due to extra muzzle blast and that pesky sound barrier, the subsonics were admirably hushed.

The Rock Family

I'm still not quite sure how they do it, but the folks at Palmetto State Armory manage to spin off different versions of their guns faster than a Congressman dodging the bar bill. When they talk about a new model, like the Rock, Dagger, or some other, prepare yourself for a shopping adventure. Today, as I wrote this, I did an approximate count

of Rock model variants on their website. I counted 48 different models and packaging of the Rock 5.7. Don't hold me to it; I guarantee the number will be different by the time you read this.

The Rock shown here has all the bells and whistles. And it retails for just \$559.99. Just to be clear, that includes optics-ready cut and plates, slide cuts for cool factor and weight reduction, nifty flat dark earth coloring and a threaded barrel.

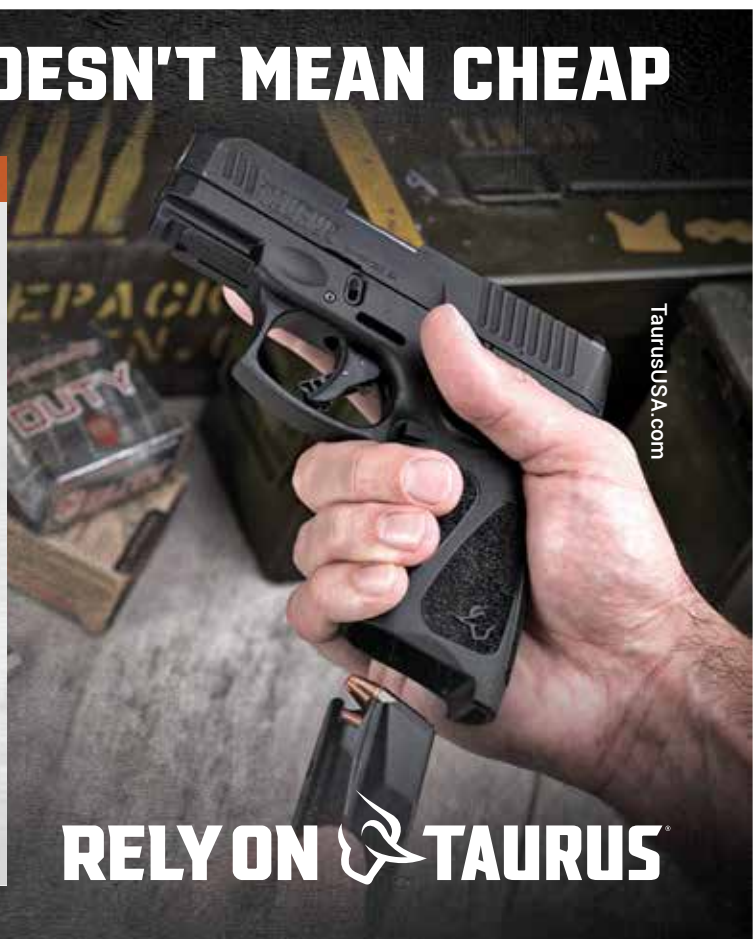
The base model Rock 5.7 without all the goodies sells for just \$399.99. And, if you keep an eye on the website, you're likely to catch one of the frequent sales.

After careful consideration of the obvious, I've come to the conclusion that Rocks are not only useful, but also quite a value. 

For more info: PalmettoStateArmory.com

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MEMOIRS OF A .22-CALIBER ARMCHAIR ALLIGATOR HUNTER

After a break of 50 years, I'm watching television. Oh, not much and not often, and never any of the networks. I do like some YouTube videos, mainly cooking and travel shows. Simone says the only reason I like cooking is as an excuse to buy more knives. My reply is, what's your point?

Most "reality" shows I find loathsome, but I admit to being hooked on *Swamp People*. The land and wildlife are so different from the dry western plains I'm used to; it seems like a different world. I do find the people much like the old-time rural folk with whom I grew up: hard working, independent, self-reliant, and in general, best left alone. I like Cajun cooking, and I'm pretty sure I'd like Cajuns.

RUSTIC RIMFIRES

Naturally, I'm particularly interested in the firearms carried in the boats by alligator hunters. Almost invariably, these are rimfire rifles, .22 LR, .22 WMRF and the occasional .17 HMR. These are working tools and treated as such, the metal blue-worn and with surface rust, stocks scratched and dented. I will say the firearms are handled safely. I never once saw a shooter cross a partner with the rifle muzzle.

The rifles remind me of my childhood and the old timers whose influence I still feel. Back then, every barn had a .22 rifle hanging on nails by the door. Generally, these were bolt-action single shots. The farmers had a few .22 Short cartridges in their pocket, useful for shooting rats and weasels in the barn without too much building damage. In the junk drawer at the house, there were a few .22 LR rounds for use at butchering time.

I DON'T GET REALITY TV

A couple of things about firearms on the show I find puzzling. One is the apparent lack of interest in stainless steel or rust-resistant finishes. Even back in the '60s, when stainless steel firearms were scarce, the Remington Nylon 66 "Apache Black" version with chrome finished barrel and action cover was recommended for



Dave's Ruger Single Six with the .22 WMRF cylinder would be perfect for popping gators from the boat. The only improvement would be if it were stainless steel with a lanyard ring.

The original chest pouch from Hill People Gear is a secure and comfortable means of carrying a handgun and has many other uses.

This Ruger American Compact in .22 WMRF is a workhorse. For boat use a stainless steel version would be better. Probably wouldn't need the scope when the target is a foot from the muzzle.

use around water. Today, we can choose from a variety of stainless steel rifles in .22 LR and a few in .22 WMRF.

The second thing I don't understand is why handguns aren't used more. When these alligator fishers dispatch a caught gator, the shooting is at almost contact range. Even an indifferent handgun shooter should have no trouble making the shot. The handgun could be carried in a fabric chest holster, which would keep it handier and better protected than a rifle, which just gets laid aside when not in use. Maybe it is simply a matter of money, using whatever old beater is at hand, but I doubt it. The price difference between a new stainless .22 and an old beater is likely less than the sales tax on those big outboard motors they use.

MY CHOMPER CALIBER

Anyway, they do what they do, apparently with success, and certainly owe no explanation to me. I've been thinking about what firearm I'd use if I were on one of these alligator hunts (which is not going to happen). I'd want a handgun for convenience. I'd make it a revolver so as not to have ejected empties in the boat. It would be in .22 WMRF. I like the idea of a

single action, so after a shot is fired, the handgun is relatively safe from a negligent discharge.

My old Ruger Single Six with its .22 Magnum cylinder in place would be about ideal, except it is not stainless. I found what to me is about ideal. Ruger calls it the Single-Nine, model #8150. It is a nine-shot .22 WMRF, stainless steel, 6.5" barrel, and fiber optic sights.

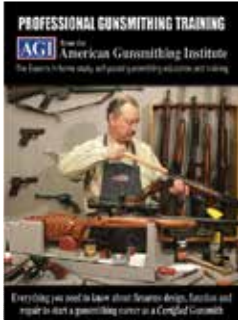
A nylon/fabric chest holster is water resistant and keeps the revolver close at hand. There are several good ones. Try the Falco model D710. For my 5.5" Single Six, I very much like the Original Kit Bag from Hill People Gear. It has the advantage of being useful even when the Single Six is locked in the gun safe. The Kit Bag has several pockets and can carry your cell phone, keys, medications, pocketknife and flashlight, everything neat and organized and ready to grab at a moment's notice.

Anytime you're working over water, a lanyard on your handgun is a good idea. A strong cord tied to the trigger guard is better than nothing, assuming you can tie a knot. A lanyard ring is even better and worth the cost if you plan to use the gun regularly in a boat. Check  Bowen Classic Arms.

For more info: BowenClassicArms.com, HillPeopleGear.com, FalcoHolsters.com

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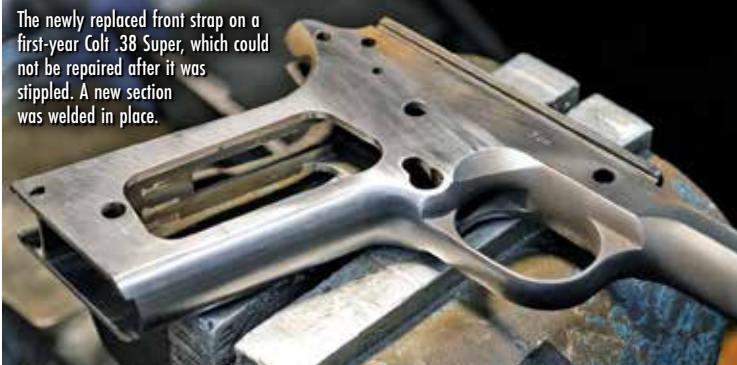
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The newly replaced front strap on a first-year Colt .38 Super, which could not be repaired after it was stippled. A new section was welded in place.



An unfired Colt 1911 is in the shop for a complete makeover and in the process of getting a written estimate for the client, which includes cost of parts, labor and shipping.



HOW TO WORK WITH A GUNSMITH

I get a few emails from readers asking about how to work with a “gunsmith.” First off, ask them if they work on the pistol you need to repair or modify. Some limit their scope of work to certain makes or models. Next, look for some credentials: feedback on previous work, groups, or professional organizations they belong to. Talk to them, ask if they are familiar with the type of gun you need worked on. If they can’t help you, they can probably point you in the right direction. Don’t be afraid to ask questions like “Have you done this before?” or “How long will it take?” or “What will it cost?” These are all questions you should be asking. And don’t sell some manufacturers short. Novak and Nighthawk both have gunsmiths on staff to help with sight installation and some custom work. I’m sure there are others.

A small fragment of a copper jacket that was lodged in a S&W Pre-29 four screw revolver caused it to be inoperable.



GET IT IN WRITING

Get a quote, in writing. Most smiths know exactly how much and how long something should take to get done. Many shops list prices on their website or can give you a good estimate for the task. If they don’t give you an estimate, be careful; you don’t want to get a surprise bill totaling more than the cost of the gun. Also, remember to get an estimate for the shipping; there are some horror stories out there. If they have been in business for a while, they know what costs should be.

Should I supply my own parts? No. Unless you are trying to use a rare vintage part, don’t ask a smith to work with your parts. Professionals choose the best parts for a reason. They are made well and usually fit properly. Most smiths will have part recommendations based on their past experiences using them. You wouldn’t bring a set of shocks to your mechanic, would you?

If it’s something special, have a discussion about it. I don’t mind using a rare part like an original BoMar sight or a Swenson thumb safety, but there are some parts I would not use.

CHALLENGES

Sometimes it’s the little things that cause big problems. One recent case was a vintage Pre-Model 29 four screw Smith & Wesson revolver. The owner had an issue with the cylinder locking up and not rotating. It was locked up solid, the hammer would not cock, I could release the cylinder and it spun freely. The hammer would cycle with the cylinder open and catch in the locked position. It took a bit of snooping, but the culprit was a small sliver of copper jacket that lodged itself between the top of the barrel and the frame. It was just that simple: One small metal fragment seized up the whole works. After freeing the copper sliver, the revolver was inspected for timing since that could cause a jacket to separate if the cylinder is not aligned perfectly with the forcing cone and barrel bore. I used an insert gauge to check that it was within spec, and also checked the cylinder stop for timing. Sometimes it’s just a bad round. During testing, there were no signs of lead or jacket shaving. This just shows how one little thing can put a stop to your firearm.

RESURRECTION UPDATE

Last issue, I talked about a rare three-digit Colt 1911 in .38 Super. The frame had been stippled at some point in its 96-year history. I removed most of the stippling with a file and sandpaper, but some divots were too deep. Next, it was welded by Jim French using a laser welder. Jim did a great job on adding material. To true it back to the original specs, I sent it to a good friend who does some outsourced work for Colt. Despite all the efforts, the front strap was still too thin. Now what? My friend is a master metalsmith, so after some discussion, it was settled that the front strap would be removed and new front strap material would be welded in. This is beyond my skill level, but not his. New material was added and trued to replicate the factory original. The next step is the slide; the original was long gone and replaced with a post-war Colt Ace slide. I sourced a vintage .38 Super slide, but it had the wrong roll marks.





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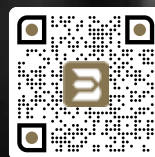
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10MM PENETRATION

My favorite gun for running 10mm is the GLOCK 20SF. It serves not only a personal defense role but also dangerous game beasts.

Getting 10mm loads to penetrate sufficiently is never a problem. The important reloading skill is to find a bullet that controls the level of penetration for the desired effect. Using only 180-grain bullets and similar loads, I made my GLOCK 20SF suitable for personal defense, hunting and last-ditch animal attacks.

TESTING TOOLS

I use a Garmin Xero Pro Chronograph for testing; compact and versatile, it also figures Standard Deviation (SD). The larger the SD, the wider the spread of the velocities and usually group size.

I shoot ballistic Clear Ballistics 10% gelatin blocks and remelt them for reuse. They are easy to calibrate and give consistent results. I have been testing cartridges so long that I had a mixing station in my garage for Knox gelatin. This was the "old school" style of ballistic testing. I used to arrive at the range with a pickup bed full of coolers packed with gelatin.

The FBI standard for ballistic testing includes shooting through bare gelatin, auto glass, clothing, and various materials, seeking bullet weight retention and proper penetration between 12" and 18". Both the Nosler ASP and Northern Precision Sabre Star do well in these tests, retaining their weight after striking a barrier.

The 10mm can be pushed to rather high velocities for a handgun. The loads here are mild. As far as pressure is concerned, most of these loads are right in the middle. For example, my Ultimate Pistol load for the Nosler ASP can be run up to 7.8 grains. It really doesn't gain much in velocity from 7.0 grains. Why not coast along?

NOSLER ASP 180

I found this bullet has a very controlled expansion in gelatin, expanding 150% and averaging 15.5" of penetration. More importantly, the SD was 9.4. The low SD translated to a very encouraging 20-yard target. Using AA#9 raised the velocity to 1,105.5 fps average, and an SD of 11.1. This gave it 17" of penetration. Using 7.4 grains of 3N37, it only went 1,008.4 average, with an SD of 14, and penetrated 14.5" average.

If I were hunting something with a thick hide (like hogs) where overpenetration was an issue (like hunting with dogs), the Nosler might be an option.

NORTHERN PRECISION

This bullet delivered dramatic expansion and created large wound channels. It is a bonded core, meaning the manufacturer has done something to keep the core and the jacket

The GLOCK 20 SF is the ideal outdoor companion. It can be employed as personal protection for 2- and 4-legged threats. The only thing it needs are Talon Grips.



The Berry's 180-grain 40/10 Hybrid Hollow Point bullet did not expand in the testing media. It did, however, deliver impressive accuracy.



from separating under stress. Non-bonded bullets often lose jacket and core pieces when fired through barriers. This one doesn't. The Sabre Star bullets expand quickly, even at lower velocities.

Working up to 12.4 of AA#9, it averaged 1,114.3 fps, with an SD of 12.2. It averaged 18" in gelatin. With 7.4 of 3N37, the bullet went 1,100 fps, and penetrated 20". The cleanest burning, most consistent load was 7.0 grains of Lovex Ultimate Pistol. The Sabre Star averaged 1,050.8 fps, penetrated 18", and had an SD of 8.6.

This bullet is a good choice for defensive purposes, but it would likely overexpand when pushed to higher velocities.

BERRY'S BULLETS

Berry's bullets are generally swaged lead with a copper plating. They're generally "softer" than jacketed bullets.

For 10mm, this can be problematic as 180-grain bullets are long enough that it takes more force to seat them into the thick walls of the case. It's easier to load them into 40 S&W cases, where the thinner wall gives less resistance.

I used an RCBS seating die with a slightly rounded seating stem. The force of seating the bullet, even with a well-expanded case mouth, deformed the bullet tip. I figured the design of the hollow point and the softness of the plating would cause it to expand quickly.

I was wrong. No matter the velocity, I could not get it to expand. It also ran slower than its jacketed counterparts using the same load. For example, 7.0 of 3N37 only got this bullet to 968.4 fps.

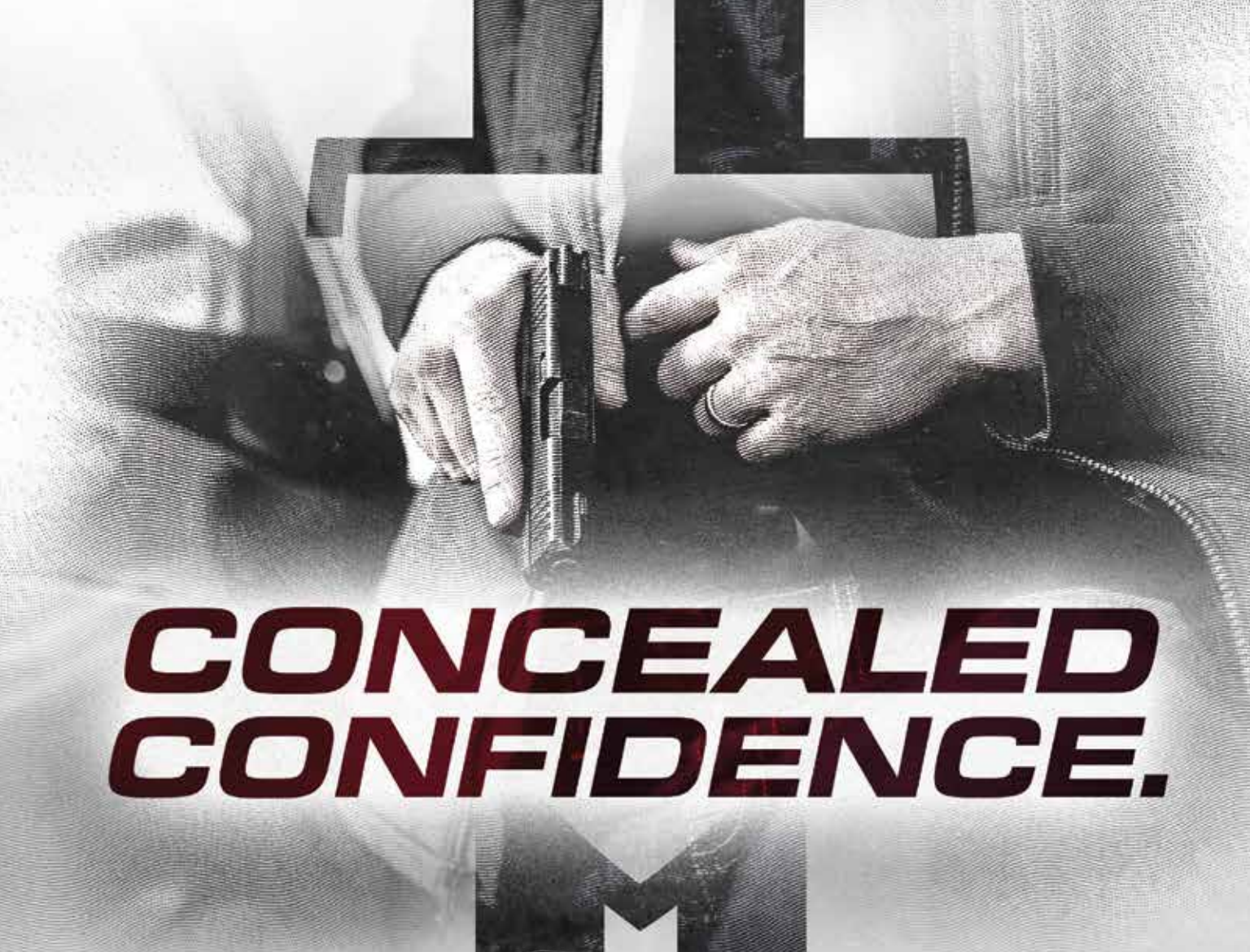
There are two caveats with the Berry's bullets. First, they were accurate when I started shooting them at 20 yards. I was using 7.0 Ultimate Pistol, and I was keeping the groups under 2.5". Second, even though the bullets did not expand in my tests, they sailed through nearly 30" of gelatin with ease. If it won't expand, at least the penetration is good.

What did I learn from this adventure? I think I answered all my questions about which load to use for bulk reloading.



This is what a bullet looks like when it comes to rest in ballistic gelatin. This 180-grain Nosler ASP bullet delivered consistent performance in tests.





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LESSONS FROM TOM GIVENS

A MODERN LEGEND IN DEFENSIVE FIREARMS TRAINING PASSES ALONG VITAL TIPS

In the world of modern firearms self-defense training, Tom Givens is a name to conjure with. A firearms instructor for more than half a century, Tom trained thousands of armed citizens at his Range-Master facility in crime-ridden Memphis before he went on the road as a traveling instructor. Seventy-four of his graduates (that he knows of) have been in shootings. Seventy-one of them won. None lost. There were three “forfeits”: people who died because, on that day, they had chosen not to be armed. Givens says, “You don’t get a vote unless you bring your own ballot.”

I had known Tom for many years and taken many useful lectures from him, but hadn’t trained live fire with him. I took his three-day Instructor Development Course at the Tall Pines range in Lakeland, Fla. I had expected a lot and was not disappointed.

Givens doesn’t just teach shooters. He excels in showing instructors how to teach, coach and diagnose. He doesn’t neglect the instructor’s duty to inspire the student to be always armed and ready, and shares why generally published crime figures far understate the reality of the problem.



Givens is heavy on lecture, giving instructors informational tools to inspire students.

TIPS FROM TOM

When loading or unloading in a hotel room, use the air conditioner as the backstop. It’s the one thing in the room most likely to safely stop a bullet,” Tom points out.

For beginning students, Tom advises, “Tell them to watch the trigger,” since they may not be familiar with our terminology. The pistol is unloaded and triple-checked, and turned over 90°, pointed at the backstop. The student looks down at the gun and particularly the trigger as they go through Tom’s mantra of “contact, (take up the) slack, press, reset.” The eyes are helping to tell the hand and the trigger finger what they should be feeling. Developed by Tom’s lovely wife, Lynn, this is called a Sensory Trigger Drill.

The instructor’s emergency medical plans should not be limited to gunshot wounds. A heart attack or heat stroke may be more likely. Include an automatic electronic defibrillator in your emergency gear.

Tom’s rule is that you must hit with every shot. He quotes the legendary Alaska super-trooper Jeff Hall: “On the street, there are no misses, only unintended hits.”

Tom wants the pad of your trigger finger on the trigger face; he wants you to feel the sear’s reset; and like a growing

number of today’s best instructors, he wants you to use a very hard grasp. How hard? “All you’ve got.” He wants the firing hand applying pressure front to back and the support hand, side by side.

He says, “Don’t ride the gun, drive the gun. Think of the front sight or the dot as a green light, and the trigger as a gas pedal.”

Givens says, “When a student is jerking their trigger, don’t tell them to slow down. They’ll just wait longer between trigger jerks. Tell them instead to be more careful.”

For transitioning between easy targets and tough ones, he says instructors don’t need to array the targets at different distances. He has found it much more time-efficient to use what he calls a parrot target. One silhouette has a big circle in the chest, a small one in the head, and two very small ones just above the silhouette like parrots on a pirate’s shoulders.

Givens emphasizes rewarding excellence and encouraging competition. He advises that the student should earn his or her certificate, not buy it. He demands a 90% score on the final, challenging (4- to 25-yard) qualification, and 90% on the extensive written exam as well. He told us about 15% of the Instructor Development students don’t make it, and that was true in our class of 15. (Student: “But I almost shot a qualifying score!” Givens: “Yes, and you almost earned a certificate.”)



The “Watch the Trigger” drill is done dry-fire, as shown.

WHEN YOU TAKE THE CLASS

Go to Tom’s website, Rangemaster.com. It will tell you everything you need. Believe it. I took his advice and brought a spare stock GLOCK 19 Gen5 to back up the Langdon Tactical version I shot, as well as 850 rounds of MagTech 9mm FMJ. No problems whatsoever. Some others weren’t so lucky. Our three days ran nine hours minimum. And, be advised: Givens’ breaks run exactly 10 minutes. He has even more advanced classes, for which this one is a non-negotiable prerequisite.

Take good notes. Have a notebook with you on the firing line: It is there that some of the most valuable nuggets are revealed. Be at the top of your shooting game when you arrive and be absolutely scrupulous about your safety habits. He’ll give you a huge workbook and assignments. Do them!

No matter how many instructor certifications you have, you will cherish this one ... but you’ll have to work for it. Strongly recommended!





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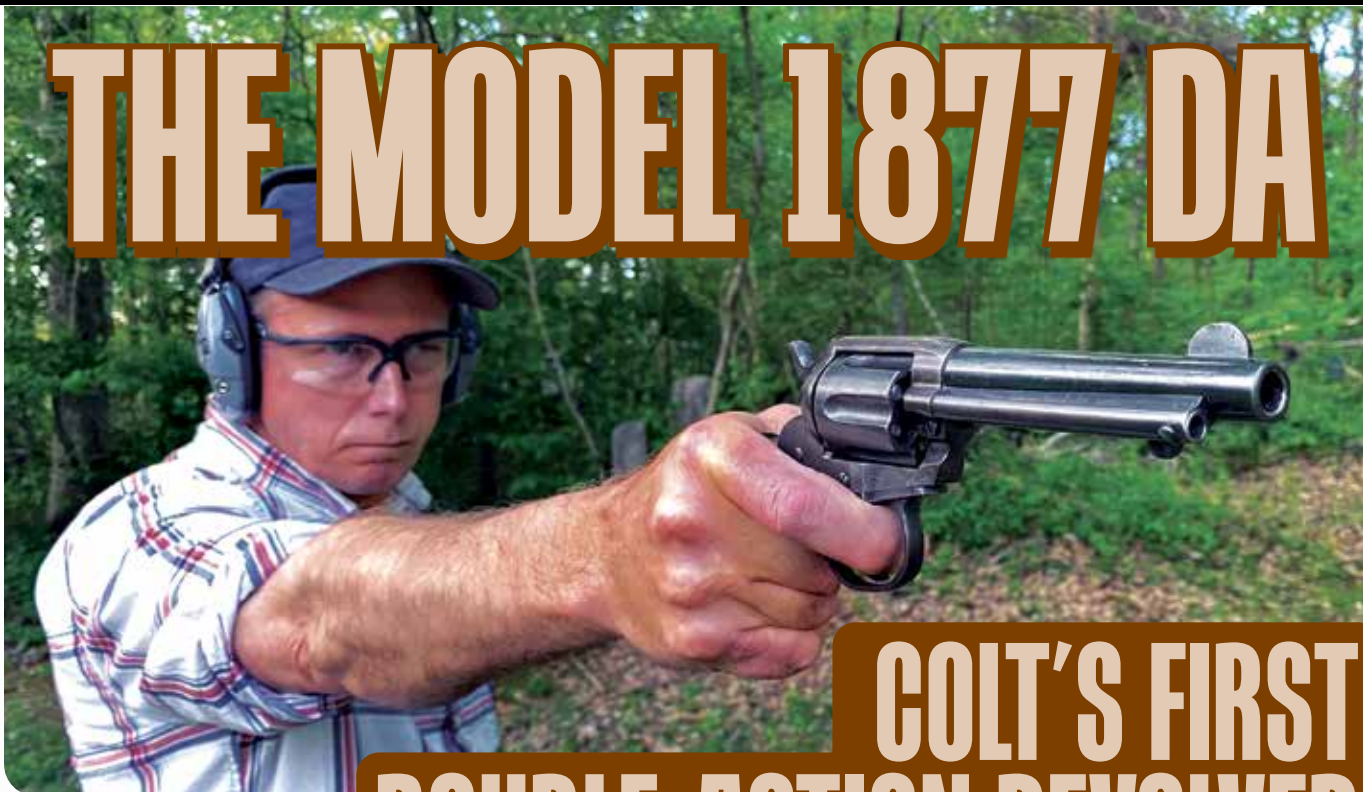
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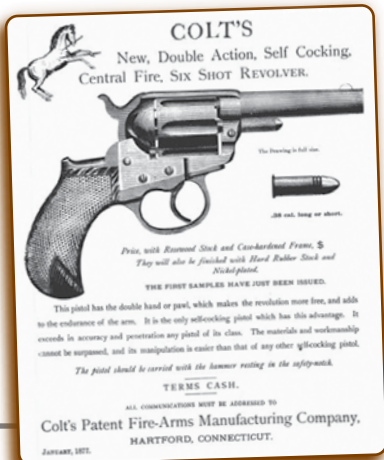


COLT'S FIRST DOUBLE-ACTION REVOLVER

The pistols were offered with and without the familiar barrel-mounted ejection rod. Barrels under 4.5" normally had no shroud and used the cylinder pin to push out spent casings.



Below: Colt's first advertising for the Model 1877 DA showing it with the one-piece, checkered, Brazilian rosewood grip common on early guns and lacking a barrel-mounted ejector.



In 1877, Colt's Patent Fire-arms introduced their first double-action revolver. Listed in the catalog as Colt's Double Action Central Fire, Six Shot Revolver, collectors know it today as the Model 1877 DA. Thanks to the marketing flair of Benjamin Kittredge & Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, one of Colt's largest distributors, it was called in its day the *Thunderer* when chambered in Colt .41 Long, the *Lightning* in Colt .38 Long, and the *Rainmaker* in .32. Because only a couple hundred were made in .32, the Rainmaker nickname is largely forgotten, but Thunderer and Lightning have become part of the lore of the Old West.

Records show 166,849 were made in total from 1877 to 1909, and for the last 20 years of production, it competed with Colt's more refined, swing-out cylinder, double-action revolver designs. As a frame of reference, during the 32 years the Model 1877 DA was in production, Colt made 275,000 Model 1873 Single Action

Here you can see the cylinder stop protruding from the recoil shield into a locking cut at the back of the cylinder. In addition to needing precise fitting, it lacks the strong spring pressure of the conventional (up-from-the-bottom) design to assist it into lock-up, a weakness inherent in the design.



Army (SSA) pistols. Without a doubt, the Model 1877 DA was a successful product for Colt, though a reputation clings to it for having a fragile action prone to spring breakage that could render its double-action function inoperative until repaired. In keeping with the Apparatus Insignis tradition, I'll explore some reasons it may have deserved this reputation, and some evidence that it didn't.

Serious Users

Quite a few serious shootists used the 1877 DA Colts. The most well-known were John Wesley Hardin, Billy



The Model 1877 DA had four hammer positions: full cock for SA fire (shown here), loading position, safe carry position and fully down with the firing pin protruding through the recoil shield. The pistol could be instantly fired in DA in any of the latter three hammer positions.

the Kid, "Doc" Holliday and Pat Garrett, the first two relying on the little double-action six-shooter as their preferred and primary weapon at times. All across the country and notably in urban areas where the need for concealability favored smaller guns, it was used by professional law enforcement officers, expressmen, and others in lines of work where they had good reason to expect to use deadly force.

Were They Reliable?

This makes me suspect the lingering tales about the Model 1877 DA being prone to breakage need to be regarded with skepticism. If these arms were so problematic, why were they used by so many people over so long a period of time? I believe the genuine complaints about the Model 1877 DA's reliability have become exaggerated as they've aged. All guns break from time to time. Given that the newest of the Model 1877 DA revolvers are 116 years old, why wouldn't they be broken? The question is: "Did they break frequently way back when in the hands of their original owners?"

The odds are they did, but apparently not so frequently to dissuade people from buying them. Having tinkered around inside a few, I can see why gunsmiths of the late 19th century, accustomed to the simplicity of the single-action, or gunsmiths from more recent times accustomed to working on modern double-action revolvers, could find the Model 1877 DA vexing. Compared to the single actions of the day, and even period English double-actions,



The front of the revolver looks like a scaled-down Model 1873 SAA, including the tiny notch and thin blade front sight. In DA shooting, conventional sighting is impossible.

the Model 1877 DA is complex and by no means a masterpiece of practical engineering. With two-piece grips, the Model 1877 DA had a total of 54 parts, including five flat springs of varying delicacy and sometimes wholly unfamiliar geometry. In comparison, a black powder single-action 1873 Colt with two-piece grips had only 41 parts and three simple and robust flat springs that were quite easy to replace, and even make if necessary. More springs mean more to break, so the Model 1877 DA is obviously at a disadvantage in that respect.

Gunsmith's Favorite?

A gunsmith worthy of the name should possess an affinity for the mechanical, and such a man with a supply of replacement springs on hand wouldn't find any great challenge in doing the necessary fitting to replace a broken one. To this man, the Model 1877 DA would be "The Gunsmith's Favorite."

In my research, the trigger return spring is the most common spring failure encountered today. It's also the



The Colt name was a guarantee of top-quality materials and construction. Naturally, the Colt 1877 DA revolvers cost more than the imports from Britain and Belgium they were initially competing with.

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One of the reasons the Model 1877 DA got traction in the American market was it offered a lot of firepower in a considerably more compact and lightweight package than the Model 1873 SAA.

easiest to repair and a reasonable DIY project for someone with a modest amount of mechanical sensibility. That being said, I'd prefer not to make that spring; and neither did Old West gunsmiths because there was more that could go wrong than right in trying to fashion an unfamiliar spring. The metallurgy and heat-treating techniques of the time could make consistent spring quality control a real challenge, at least until the best practices were discovered by experimentation. I'd expect a certain number of

failed springs early on in the production process as the factory trained up to build the new gun. People remember when things break more than they remember when they work perfectly ... and so a bad reputation can be made.

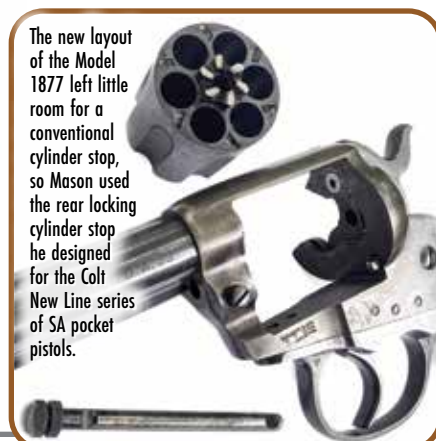
Lockwork Design

The other major criticism of the Model 1877 DA is the basic strength of the lockwork design. Colt Factory Superintendent William Mason designed the 1877 DA. It would be hard to find a man with better credentials. He was the co-designer of the Model 1873 SAA and, by all accounts, a man of exceptional talent. On the Model 1877 DA, Mason used the cylinder lockup he previously designed for the little pocket metallic cartridge Colt New Line revolvers.

Rather than having the locking bolt engaging cuts around the outside circumference of the cylinder in the conventional way, the New Lines had narrow locking notches cut between the chambers in the rear face of the cylinder engaged by a thin cylinder stop that protruded through the frame's recoil shield.



From this angle, you can compare the grip size of the Model 1873 SAA (left) and the Model 1877 DA (right).



The new layout of the Model 1877 left little room for a conventional cylinder stop, so Mason used the rear locking cylinder stop he designed for the Colt New Line series of SA pocket pistols.

He revisited this idea in the larger Model 1877 DA and again in the swing-out cylinder Model 1889 New Navy Revolver. Though it obviously worked, it could not be the equal of the conventional cylinder lock-up used on Colt's single actions, which were physically larger, mechanically stronger and more durable.

I wouldn't be too critical of Mason for this. He got the ergonomics of the Model 1877 DA perfect, and it's the equal of a modern double-action revolver in that respect. The physical layout of a double-action revolver, with the trigger under the middle of the cylinder instead of the rear as in Colt's single actions, didn't leave much room for the conventional cylinder stop, and the one Mason developed for the New Line was an off-the-shelf solution. Also, coming to the double-action game late, Colt put Mason in the position of having to work around existing, mostly British, patents.

Durability: DA Vs. SA

The Colt single actions' well-earned reputation for simplicity and reliability made them a tough act to follow. Just by virtue of having more action springs and smaller, less rugged parts, I would expect the Model 1877 DA to be more susceptible to breakage than Colt's single actions over the long haul. When and how often the guns' inherent design weaknesses manifested themselves during their normal use lifespan, I can't say with certainty. Their popularity suggests they worked well enough, long enough.

Today, over a century later, it's common to find them out of time. One weird timing failure with the 1877 DA that I've personally observed was a lag in the retraction of the cylinder lock from its slot in the rear face of the cylinder that caused its exposed tip to catch on the rim of the cartridge case and prevent it from rotating!

The Colt 1877 DA wasn't the first double-action revolver in America, but it was the first widely produced true double-action revolver in America. Other American companies followed Colt's lead in the 1880s, with the biggest-selling double actions being those .38 caliber and below, with the low-quality end of the market responsible for the majority of production. When it came to big bore revolvers, Americans clung to the single-action for an unusually long time for a people building up an industrialized, technologically sophisticated society. I suspect this had a lot to do with the folklore of the Old West, which Colt, the man and the company, continuously cultivated to their marketing advantage.





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THE “DEFENSIVE”

.22



Once marksmanship is learned with a .22, a student seeking something for concealed carry or home defense should source a centerfire gun. A multitude of great choices exist.

When I first began shooting back in my early 20s, a lot of my trigger time was spent wrangling a GI-pattern 1911 in John Browning’s original caliber of .45 ACP. I didn’t want to admit it then, but I’m wise enough to acknowledge it now: It was too much gun for me. That old GI thumb buster didn’t tear my arm off or anything, but I certainly mashed the hell out of the trigger with each round I fired.

A few years later, I had the good horse sense to purchase a Ruger Mark II of my very own. I remember heading to the range and being downright stunned to find I could cluster the overwhelming majority of my

shots inside of a silver dollar-sized target within seven yards. Quite truly, that Ruger helped build my confidence and stumble my way into an intermediate skill set.

The Big Question ...

At about that point — and despite the ample volume of printed words I’d read attempting to dissuade me otherwise — an intrusive thought began to enter my brain. I would bet a number of our readers have entertained a similar notion. It goes a little something like this:

“If I can shoot my .22 fast, and if I know I can use it to make good hits,” I asked myself, “Why wouldn’t it be an acceptable choice for matters of self-defense?”

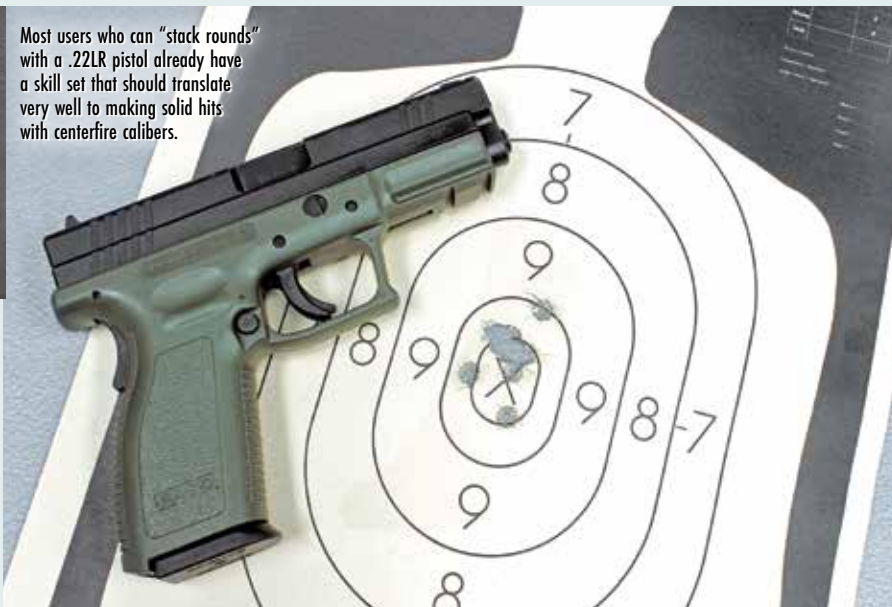
Today, I’m better equipped to answer that question for my past self. Not only do I find myself agreeing with conventional arguments against the idea now that I’m older and wiser, but I’ve formed a few thoughts of my own along the way.

Traditional Cases Against

Understanding why nearly every expert will steer a user away from a



The .22LR next to .380 and .45ACP JHPs, which have more mass and much better expansion potential.



Most users who can "stack rounds" with a .22LR pistol already have a skill set that should translate very well to making solid hits with centerfire calibers.

rimfire pistol or rifle when choosing a defensive tool comes down, broadly, to two areas where the .22LR cartridge is questionable: reliability and efficacy.

We'll start with reliability first. Obviously, there's a fundamental difference in the way that rimfire and centerfire cartridges work. The heart of the centerfire cartridge is the primer. When struck, it will create a plume of flame that ignites the powder sitting just above it. You're probably already aware of this.

In a rimfire cartridge, however, a priming compound has to be squirted into the case in liquid form, at which point the cases are spun so the compound ekes into the internal crevices under the lip of the cartridge rim. That compound then becomes impact sensitive once it dries. It's a wonder the rimfire priming system works as well as it does; certainly, it's a testament to the quality control of some of our favorite ammunition producers.

When comparing the inherent reliability of centerfire and rimfire systems in "real world" contexts, however, it's not even close. I have to comb through my memory banks to think of the last time I had a dud centerfire round. Even in those cases, an unexpected "click" rather than a bang was due to an equipment malfunction or modification related to the gun itself. Weak springs are almost always the culprit, though a broken or out-of-spec firing pin is sometimes to blame.

By comparison, I encountered an uncooperative rimfire cartridge the second-to-last time I was at the range. When the impact of the firing pin failed to set the round off, I rotated the cartridge a half-turn in the chamber to give it a strike elsewhere on the rim — a process that becomes almost second nature to well-traveled .22LR shooters. That sent it.

Even seasoned rimfire shooters will tell you that a bad round, even from quality ammo makers, and when fed into excellent, well-maintained tools, is just flat out something that happens. That's not an ideal quality in a defensive arm.

Let's next address the question of efficacy. It's certainly true that even a lowly .22 has the potential to end an assailant's malfeasance. The problem lies in how well a rimfire projectile performs that task. Consider this: While a 40-grain, .22 caliber bullet travels at about the same speed as a 124-grain 9mm bullet

(say about 1,050fps), it has a third of the mass and a third of the bigger object's momentum and kinetic energy. Most .22 hollow points also tend to expand minimally, if they manage to at all.

It's a little beyond the scope of our present discussion to get further into the weeds of the terminal performance of various rimfire loads. However, I'd invite our readers to explore the extensive ballistics testing performed by Chris Baker and the team over at LuckyGunner.com. Greg Ellifritz's exploration of firearms' stopping power, published online by the Buckeye Firearms Association, is further good reading.

The Skill Question

Let's table all of the above for a moment and concentrate on the best case of the defensive .22: First, that all rounds

fire without a hitch, and second, that all rounds are delivered rapidly and exactly where the shooter hopes to place them. Indeed, there are going to be a lot of our readers who know they can call upon their own rimfire handgun to dump six rounds into a head-sized target in about the time it takes a person to sneeze.

To those people, I say this: *If you're at that stage, you can probably shoot nearly as impressively and capably with a centerfire handgun.*

Indeed, rapidly stacking rounds with a rimfire handgun requires not just good execution of the fundamentals, but also application of more advanced pistolcraft. In particular, the dudes who can pap-pap-pap three rounds into a softball-sized target already know how to get onto the trigger quickly and how to ride the reset. They're going to be front

The rimfire conversion unit is a great innovation, though it's critical to switch slide assemblies as a gun's role switches back to self-defense.





The rimfire pistol might be a comfortable and familiar companion, but its limitations as a defensive arm are significant for shooters of all skill levels.



Numerous .22LR handguns may initially seem like viable defensive options or carry pieces, but they're best utilized as training tools.

The Astra Cub in .22 short is very small, and better than yelling at someone trying to kill you, but that's about all it has going for it beyond yuks.

sight or dot focused, tracking it through the recoil process, and touching the trigger off again when it settles. They're also quite certain to have figured out the value of a good stance and shooting platform, which will allow them to drive the muzzle of the gun back on target.

Irony

And therein lies the irony, to me, of the "defensive rimfire" pistol: Anyone capable of using it as an effective self-defense tool would be better served by applying all of those skills to a centerfire handgun if a serious situation arises. The time to make a first-round hit is going to be virtually identical, and while a skilled shooter's split times might be a bit worse going from rimfire to centerfire, they're not going to be that much worse.

As a case in point, my own split times with a .22 handgun are about 0:22 seconds between shots. That's if I want to

be sure I'm placing my rounds as fast as I can into a generally "A-zone" sized target at seven yards with zero misses. If I switch to most of my 9mms, that increases to about 0.33 seconds. At least that's the data from my last range trip; some days I'm a little slower, and some days I'm a little faster, but that's usually the amount of time I need.

Now, you could look at that as an astonishing 50% increase in my split times, jumping from a .22LR to a 9mm handgun over two seconds. It's the difference of getting another three hits on target between the smaller caliber and the larger. But, comparing the 40-grain and 124-grain bullets being launched, centerfire yields a 106% increase in the payload dumped into a particular target in the same amount of time. Food for thought.

What's additionally interesting is exploring the notion of the "defensive .22" from the bottom of the skill ladder, where someone of limited hand strength and expertise desires a handgun for self-protection. This is a person who will likely be landing fewer shots in a given amount of time and placing them less accurately. In that context, wouldn't it be a generally better idea to ensure that each of those rounds was as effective as possible?

But Could It Work?

Certainly, a .22LR or .22 Magnum handgun has the theoretical benefit of size in its favor: The diminutive caliber permits firearms to be designed much smaller and lighter than

an equivalent, CCW-intended gun in a centerfire caliber like 9mm or .45 ACP. My Astra Cub in .22 short is not what I would want to rely on to stop someone determined to do me physical harm. However, it can be stored in the fifth pocket of one's jeans. Guns like this allow someone to go armed in contexts where it might not otherwise be possible.

A number of our readers may also point to a varying number of "tactical" .22s that have proliferated the market. Almost all of them are of similar size to their centerfire counterparts, and have very little similarity to the .22 target pistols of yesteryear. It's easy to look at this class of firearms and conclude they were designed for some measure of defensive utility.

That said, I would wager most of us here at *American Handgunner* would argue the purpose of these guns is to serve as understudies for the big boys: With the low cost of ammo, it's a lot easier to practice drawing, firing, reloading, and other actions requiring various "reps," and then translating those skills to a more serious and similarly sized pistol. You're more likely to practice on a platform that doesn't beat your hands and wallet up.

As the saying goes, any firearm — even a mousegun or one in a rimfire caliber — is better than harsh words and has the potential to defend life and limb. There are, however, almost always better choices. Today, it's hard for me to visualize any kind of shooter who would be best served by a rimfire firearm in any kind of defensive context. Especially and including people who can wield one very fast and accurately. 

A multiplicity of rimfire ammo types exist, but few, if any, are solid defensive options.





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THE KELTEC PR57

The Keltec PR57 is quite likely the lightest, most capable concealed carry gun available today.

THE COMPACT LIGHTWEIGHT CONCEALED CARRY POCKET RIFLE

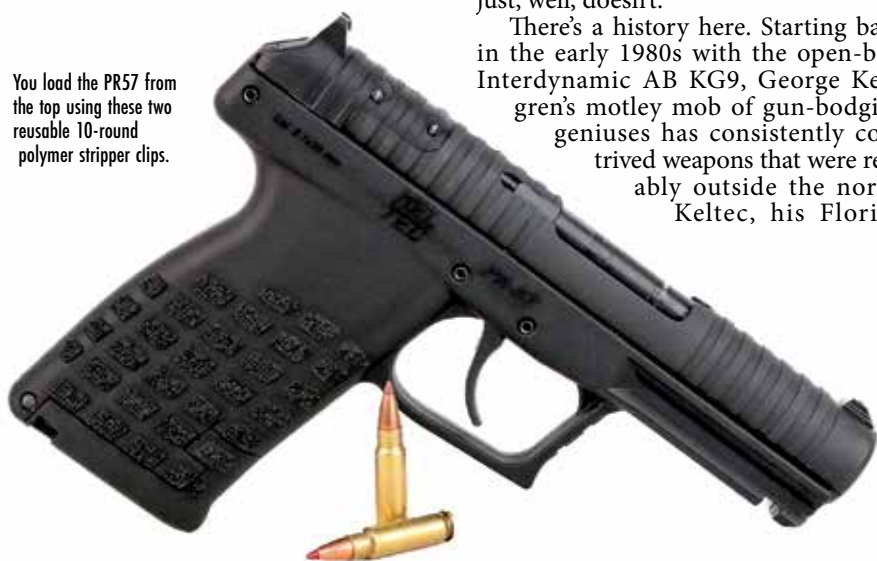
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There are lots of different loads available for the 5.7x28mm these days.



You load the PR57 from the top using these two reusable 10-round polymer stripper clips.



The Keltec PR57 is a shockingly different smoke pole. In a world wherein somebody's new frame stippling or atypical hue on the same old Browning-inspired, short-recoil combat pistol is adequate to induce the vapors in the collective gun press, the PR57 represents a transformative departure from convention. Where literally every other modern tactical handgun on Planet Earth feeds from a box magazine inserted into the grip, the new PR57 just, well, doesn't.

There's a history here. Starting back in the early 1980s with the open-bolt Interdynamic AB KG9, George Kellgren's motley mob of gun-bodging geniuses has consistently contrived weapons that were reliably outside the norm. Keltec, his Florida

company, churns out what are hands-down the most innovative firearms in the industry. There are guns that fold and rimfire pistols with flush-fitting 30-round magazines. They offer compact battle rifles that eject forward and twin-magazine bullpup shotguns packing a zillion rounds onboard. And now there's this thing ...

Details

The PR57 is chambered for 5.7x28mm and ignites via an enclosed hammer for a delightfully smooth, light and consistent trigger experience. You hold it in your hand and bullets come out the scary end. However, that's about the only thing that is normal or predictable about this gun.





To disassemble the PR57, you simply press the trigger forward and remove the slide. This is one radically innovative combat pistol.

The PR57 sports a polymer frame and steel slide. The gun accepts a micro red dot as well as a rail-mounted light. Its action is simply mesmerizing.

The rotating barrel and slide lock via the neatest cam-driven, star-shaped lug system built into the muzzle end. I've been squeezing triggers for fun and money since I was six, and I've never encountered anything quite like this. Additionally, the gun weighs less than 14 oz. empty.

Let that sink in. The PR57 weighs about the same as two standard adult hamsters. That's about a third the weight of a standard M1911. This thing makes a Walther PPK seem obese by comparison. Compared to more conventional carry pistols, the PR57 feels like it might just float away. However, all that pales in comparison with how you load it.

The PR57 feeds from an integral, non-removable 20-round magazine that charges from the top via stripper clips. Think M1 Garand or Kar 98k. The gun comes with two reusable 10-round strippers and a little thumb pusher thing to accelerate the process. Because the magazine is built into the frame, there is no magazine release or mag body. That's one of the reasons that this thing is so anorexic. The end result is a low-cost, high-velocity, minimalist concealed carry gun for the masses. The PR57 will absolutely ruin you to heavy, bulky carry guns. It feels positively weightless by comparison.

Old And New

To fully comprehend how different this gun is compared to more modern fare, we need to roll the wayback meter to the late 19th century. Fidel, Friedrich and Josef Federle worked at



Left: This beast of a 5.7x28mm cartridge from Elite Ammunition fires a needle-pointed penetrator made from hardened copper. It looks and acts like a miniature sabot penetrator from an Abrams tank.



The PR57 is quite compact when compared to its competition.

Waffenfabrik Mauser in Oberndorf, Germany, crafting the first prototype of what would eventually become the C96 Mauser. C96 stood for *Konstruktion*. I have no idea the significance of that term. This groundbreaking pistol fired 7.63x25mm ammunition via an integral 10-round magazine that fed from the top. For its time, the C96 was unnaturally sleek, fast and powerful.

Chinese warlords called the gun the "Box Cannon." The Irish christened the weapon "Peter the Painter." Everyone else on the planet referred to it as the "Broomhandle" after its distinctive round grip.

There were scads of variations in at least seven different chamberings. Charging the Broomhandle from the top via strippers was markedly faster



Lightweight, compact and radically different, the Keltec PR57 redefines the concealed carry pistol.

The only external switch is a slide lock used solely for loading.



in enlightened gun nerd circles. That refers to three shots in three seconds at three yards. With the PR57, you could do that half a dozen times and still have two shots to spare.

Some serious gunmen might poo-poo the diminutive 5.7x28mm round as a fight stopper. However, Army psychiatrist-cum-professional psychopath Major Nidal Hasan used a 5.7x28mm pistol to murder 13 of his fellow soldiers in cold blood back in 2009 at Fort Hood, Texas. I suspect anyone who might doubt the effectiveness of this zippy little lightweight round has never been shot with 20 of them. Fiocchi 40-grain polymer-tipped bullets break 1,700 fps at the muzzle.

How freaking cool is this? The PR57 locks via this star-shaped system at the muzzle.



than the reloading protocols of other competing designs. Some 1.1 million copies were produced both legally and not. Now the PR57 brings that same Broomhandle magic into the Information Age.

Practical Tactical

Feeding the new PR57 is indeed reliably different. Lock the slide to the rear and then seat a loaded 10-round stripper in the top. Push the top of the round stack, and the cartridges snap readily in place. You then remove the empty stripper and save it for later. Repeat this process to top the gun off with a full 20 rounds. There's no way to do that really fast. However, now you have a tiny, lightweight, concealed carry pistol with a full 20 rounds on tap.

The FBI claims that most close-quarters gun-fights are resolved within three to five rounds. There is a somewhat antiquated "Rule of Threes" that is yet still bantered about

Trigger Time

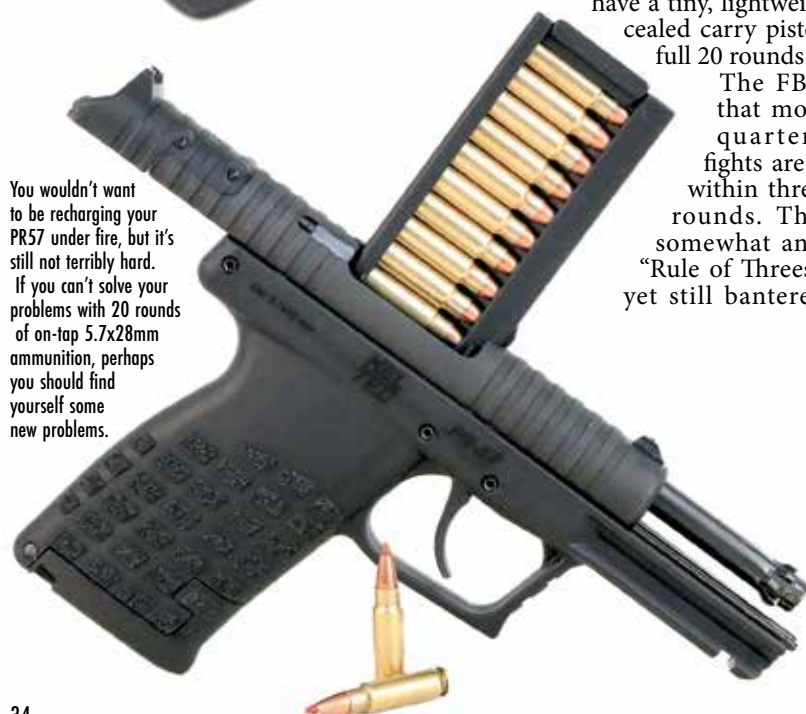
Oh my. The PR57 runs like an ape after an apple. Recoil is not real, and the hammer-fired trigger is positively diaphanous. It takes no serious talent to keep all 20 rounds on a juice can lid at typical CQB (close quarters battle) ranges.

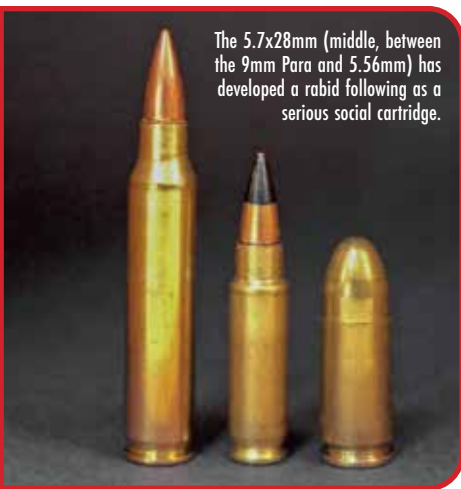
Break-in took about a box of ammo, then it ran like a sewing machine. Double taps quickly became triple taps. The PR57 shot like a laser and felt like a souped-up rimfire. Water-filled Coke cans explode like hand grenades downrange.

It's weird not having any switches to manage. The little lever on the left is a slide lock to aid in loading, but that's it. Just charge the gun in advance and then don't sweat the details. This is the classic point-and-click interface. Draw the weapon, orient it toward something you dislike, and squeeze. Repeat as necessary.

The fastest magazine change is the one you don't have to make. In a world where concealed carry guns might pack 15 or more rounds onboard, the PR57 eclipses all of them in a trim package that weighs about nothing. Despite its prodigious capacity, the diminutive caliber and unconventional design synergistically conspire to keep things svelte, trim, lightweight and packable.

You wouldn't want to be recharging your PR57 under fire, but it's still not terribly hard. If you can't solve your problems with 20 rounds of on-tap 5.7x28mm ammunition, perhaps you should find yourself some new problems.





The 5.7x28mm (middle, between the 9mm Para and 5.56mm) has developed a rabid following as a serious social cartridge.

George Kellgren's company, Keltec, has a long and illustrious history of producing incredibly innovative firearms.



I found the PR57 to be unnaturally straight-shooting. It's also simply great fun. If somebody gifted you with a tractor load of 5.7 ammo and a PR57, you'd likely linger on the range until you starved to death.

Ruminations

In the last 125 years, tech has verifiably exploded. A revolution in engineering, materials science and micro-electronics has transformed modern life. However, across all of that technological advancement, handguns still remained about the same. Frame materials

evolved and capacities grew predictably larger, but the concept didn't much budge. And then the PR57 happened.

The new Keltec PR57 takes a time-proven 19th-century concept and redefines it beautifully for the Information Age. I am smitten with mine. I'm also completely comfortable using the PR57 as my standard defensive handgun. The Keltec

PR57 is yesterday's high-tech security tool transformed for tomorrow. The MSRP is only \$399.



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CZ SHADOW 2



CARRY 9MM



JEREMY D. CLOUGH
PHOTOS: ROB JONES/THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

THE SHADOW KNOWS

The argument between the gamesmen and the martial artists is a long one: Whether a shooting competition is a game to be won, using equipment specifically and solely for that purpose, or whether it is training for self-defense and should be limited to guns, calibers and ammunition suitable for fighting. Just like the idea that we have an imagination, so our thoughts die instead of us, most of us in the martial artist camp understand that competition is a useful venue in which new technology can be tested and developed, where failure only means losing points, not your life.

This makes it not-so-surprising that innovations once considered only viable for competitions are now commonly used for concealed carry — dots, comps and 2011s, I'm looking at

you. CZ's Shadow 2 Carry is intended to do just that: incorporate the lessons learned from competition into a serious daily carry pistol.

Unless you're immersed in it, the names, numbers and even colors of the CZ world are a bit confusing. Candidly, it took me some digging to figure out exactly what the Shadow 2 is and what makes it different from some of CZ's other compact pistols. So let's start out with a bit of a tour of the Czech company.

Shadow Roots

Like the most popular of its offerings, the Shadow 2 Carry is based on the iconic CZ 75, but even with its match heritage, the Carry is a more direct descendant of the P-01 military pistol. The original 75 was little known





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SHADOW 2 CARRY 9MM



CZ SHADOW 2 CARRY



in the U.S. until after the fall of the Iron Curtain, which had barred its importation, but well respected by no less than Col. Jeff Cooper, the founder of practical shooting, who championed it as the basis of the 10mm Bren Ten with which he was involved. More than a little Hi-Powery, but with a double-action trigger and the slightly bulbous design aesthetic that keeps most Czech pistols from being elegant, the CZ 75 was unique in that the hammer could be carried down for a DA first shot or cocked and with the safety applied for single action use.

After nearly 30 years as one of the standard military pistols used worldwide, in 2003, NATO approved the P-01 variant (NSN 1005-16-000-8619). Gone was the short dustcover and Hi-Power-style narrowed muzzle, replaced by a rail that went to the muzzle. A single dramatic scoop

from the side of the wide-ish receiver (thanks in part to the slide rails, which run inside the frame) provides clearance for the trigger finger. A compact model expected to deliver the performance of a full-size pistol, the P-01 averaged over 2,000 rounds between malfunctions, over four times the acceptable rate of 500 rounds, which coincidentally also happens to be my personal standard.

Unsurprisingly, this compact P-01 was followed by the full-size SP-01, also intended for military and law enforcement, but still quite effective in competition. After taking 1st and 3rd in Production class at the IPSC World Shoot in 2005, the SP-01 was refined with input from the shooters who put it on the podium, becoming the SP-01 Shadow. The Shadow 2 further trimmed down the already low-profile slide (similar to the Blue and Orange Tactical Sports pistols) and offered an optic-ready variant, as did the CZ Shadow 2 Compact.

Shadow 2 Carry

The Carry (which we're covering here) and Compact share the same 4" barrel and other dimensions, plus an aluminum frame that shaves a pound off the optic-ready Shadow 2 and a couple ounces from the steel-framed CZ 75 Compact. This puts them neatly in the size window occupied by the GLOCK 19 and the CCO-size 1911, which many of us consider the ideal balance of accuracy, controllability and concealability ideal for a compact carry gun.

Gone is the familiar Coke bottle grip shape of the classic CZ 75. Both have flat machined aluminum grips like CZ's "color" competition pistols, with silver on the Compact and black on the Carry. To add strength, the aluminum frame guns run about 0.10" thicker than their steel counterparts, but those grips keep the

overall width nearly a quarter inch flatter than a traditional '75. And they're not uncomfortable. While my personal taste runs more to the Nill grips I have on my '75, the Carry grips seem to help the gun index better. Both the rear and frontstrap of the frame have raised panels of coarse, flattened checkering that gives good purchase without being draw-blood sharp.

The Compact and Carry 15-round magazines interchange with one another and other CZ 75 9mm mags. The models vary in sights and action: While both are optic-ready, the Shadow 2 Compact uses a plate system and its adjustable rear sight is attached to the cover that has to be removed to add an optic, while the Carry's fixed rear sight stays in place, providing a valuable backup. The Compact has CZ's familiar pinned-in front blade, while the Carry's is dovetail mounted.

The Carry is cut for an RMSc footprint with no plate required. I promptly removed the cover and mounted a Holosun EPS Carry directly to the slide, using one of the included sets of screws and laying aside the unneeded RMSc-to-K adaptor plate. Boasting 50,000 hours of run time and a shake-awake feature, the closed-emitter Holosun is powered by a CR1620 battery in a slide-out tray and has a solar backup. The MRS version I used has a 2 MOA dot or 32 MOA circle reticle, from which I chose the plain dot. I've been shooting Holosun's similar open-emitter 507 for the last few years and have been duly impressed with it; the EPS worked every bit as well. As I was taught by Gunsite instructor Aimee Grant, I used the face of the optic to cycle the slide for reloads and other manipulations.

Operations & Handling

Like the original P-01 from which it came, the Carry has a decocker instead of the usual cocked-and-locked option offered by the Compact, making it the only decocker gun of the 8 Shadow variants listed by the manual. Candidly, this seems a bit of an anachronism to me, as I thought everyone disliked the transition between double-action first shot and single afterwards as much as I do. The sheer dearth of such pistols on the market compared to single-action and striker-fired pistols would seem to support that, but I'm sure CZ knows something I don't.

What I wanted to know was how it affected my ability to hit, so I fired a series of five-shot groups at 7 yards, double action, decocking between shots, then another set with a DA first shot followed by four single action. I managed several one-hole groups DA, followed by a number of one-hole groups DA/SA — a lesser number, but still, I managed it.



When I shot controlled pairs at the same distance, with a DA first shot, SA second, I had no problem keeping them close, but had I picked up the pace to a fast split time, I imagine they'd have spread pretty quickly. The gun handled well, with all the controls where your thumb expects, and while the slide dropped a few times when I was slamming in a reload, it never failed to load a round into the chamber when that happened.

The trigger on the test gun averaged 10 lbs., 5 oz. from the decocked position, and 5 lbs. single action, compared to an advertised 11.9/4.7, respectively. It broke with the expected roll, which, when tried alongside my CZ 75B Omega and CZ 75B Compact, felt a little less smooth than the Compact, but about the same as my Omega.

Range Testing

Test ammo consisted of 500 rounds of Colt National Match 147 ball provided by DoubleTap, as well as 20 rounds of Winchester +P 124 JHP, 25 rounds of Hornady +P 124 XTP, and 50 rounds each of Fiocchi 124-grain Training Dynamics FMJ and 115-grain Defense Dynamics JHP, for a total of 645 rounds.

And here's where I learned a hard lesson. CZs are known to have chambers on the shortish side: My 124-grain handloads would chamber easily in my Hi-Power but simply wouldn't go into my CZ 75. That, along with a cold hammer forged barrel, is part of how CZs get their accuracy. As it turned out, 147-grain bul-

lets also have a bit of a bad reputation in CZs. The 147 ball fed flawlessly — the gun never bobbled in over 500 rounds — but once we got past the 7 yards at which it would punch one hole, well, better not to talk about it. Mystified, I chronographed 43 rounds, which averaged 861 fps with an extreme spread of 59 fps and a low standard deviation of 11. I have shot thousands of rounds of DoubleTap ammo in nearly a dozen calibers, and it has been uniformly excellent, and this specific load showed consistent ballistics. But whether it was rifling twist rate, chamber depth or some other variable, this gun just didn't like that bullet weight.

My usual test, which I know is out of the mainstream, is to take the pistol out of the box and put 500 rounds through it without cleaning or oiling. Abusive perhaps, but a pistol that passes it is almost certain to be reliable — and most do. Once past those 500 rounds, the Carry got a little sluggish in feeding, and when I field stripped it, the slide rails were bone-dry. Adding oil to the rails and outside of the muzzle and chamber area of the barrel helped, but it still needs a good cleaning.

With defensive ammo, it performed exactly like what I would expect from a CZ 9mm — better, even. I shot 14 groups at 25 yards, resting my hands on the bench. If we generously include one group that went 2.026", ten of those 14 were 2" or under. Five of them (again, including a close one at 1.538") went 1.5" or tighter, with a best group of 1.084".

Standing unsupported, I put 4/5 of my rounds into 1.33", with a flyer landing a couple inches away, and managed five DA hits from the top half of a mag on the 10"x16" steel ram at 100 yards.

I'd be happy with that on any platform I shoot. Sub 2" accuracy from a defensive gun that runs all the time is generally the province of high-end 1911 pistols that run multiples of the Carry's \$1,300 street price, and below 1.5" is near-mystical. I have guns that will do it, but not many — and they did it out of a Ransom Rest, not handheld.

I used to believe CZ was the most underestimated gun company in the world, but since then, word has gotten out. And they're still better than you think. As for the  Carry? I'd carry it.

For more info: CZ-USA.com, Holosun.com, DoubleTapAmmo.com



SMITH & WESSON CLASSICS WHEELGUNS

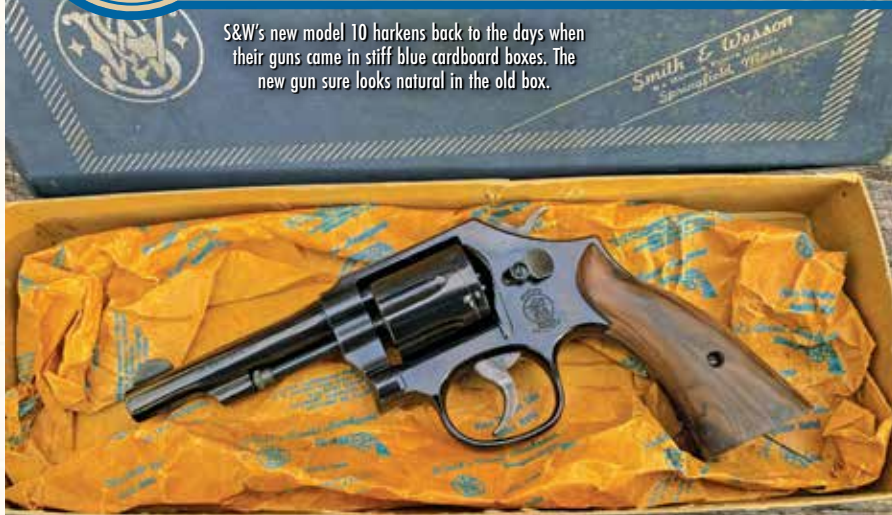
Newly released revolvers from S&W will jar you back to the days when guns didn't need safeties or warning labels and people were responsible for their own actions.



JEFF "TANK" HOOVER

NEW & NOSTALGIC

S&W's new model 10 harkens back to the days when their guns came in stiff blue cardboard boxes. The new gun sure looks natural in the old box.



Back in 1899, S&W released a mid-frame hand ejector revolver chambered in .38 Special. Geared for policemen and soldiers of the day, S&W called it the Military and Police. It wasn't until the 1950s that the gun was referred to as the Model 10.

Still in production today, with a conservative estimate of over 6 million revolvers produced, the "K" frame M&P has seen service in two World Wars and is one of the most successful revolver stories in the history of guns.

New Release, Old Theme

At SHOT Show 2025, S&W released three "Classics" that will have nostalgic

sixgunners drooling appreciatively. The first gun is a 4" Model 10, complete with integral half-moon front sight. This gun is the granddaddy of the second gun, a 4" Model 19. Last is a Model 36, Chief Special.

Happy Days

The guns look like past originals of older Models made earlier by S&W during the early Post-War days of the 1950s. The biggest news, and it's huge — all three guns *do not have* side panel safety locks.

The guns are nicely blued, having smooth actions, especially by today's litigious standards. All stocks are made by Tyler Gun Works in vintage appropriate styles, which are period correct for their era.

Why?

Why would S&W release remakes of classic guns when collectors can purchase so many "originals" listed on auction sites? The answer is simple. The new guns are made better. Before feelings of sentimental "snickery" start spouting slurs, insults and horns, let me explain.

Today's guns have the advantage of improved steels and heat treating, making them stronger, particularly the cylinders. The internal lock-work is also improved; it had to be when the side panel lock was removed. While vintage guns are out there, wouldn't you rather shoot a new gun as your everyday shooter, saving the condition of your prized collectible S&W for special occasions?

Lastly, the new guns are less expensive than some of the older original collectibles out there.

The Military & Police

Looking at the Military & Police instantly returns you to the days of gangsters and cops wearing long woolen overcoats. S&W's Supervisor of Revolver Production, Andrew Gore, told me he chose the '50s era M&P because he thought it was the best-looking version of this classic model.

Today's Classic M&P

S&W did a fantastic job recreating the classic M&P. While the bluing isn't a perfect match to vintage guns of yesteryear, it's darn close, harkening back to the good old days when blued guns weren't an option, but your only choice. The 4" tapered barrel has the iconic integral half-moon front sight as well as a machined groove top strap for the rear sight.

For a cop on the beat or soldier in battle, this is the only way to go for ruggedness and reliability. The exposed ejector rod locks into the integral barrel



The Model 19 has a traditional ramped front sight, pinned blade, with red insert. The words "357 Magnum — Combat Magnum" still stir the souls of the men who carried them.

lug, providing a tight lock-up and giving it a vintage flair. Smooth Magna walnut grips, sans medallions from Tyler Gun Works, give it the appearance of a custom gun. The DA trigger pull is smooth, breaking at 9 lbs., 2 oz., and 3 lbs. for the SA pull. The smooth trigger face provides comfortable DA shooting.

The gun has a frame-mounted firing pin and a full-sized, checkered cylinder release. Hammer and trigger are both color-case hardened, showing brilliant colors. These guns are marked 10–15 and are rated for +P factory ammunition. Weight is 34.6 oz.

Shooting

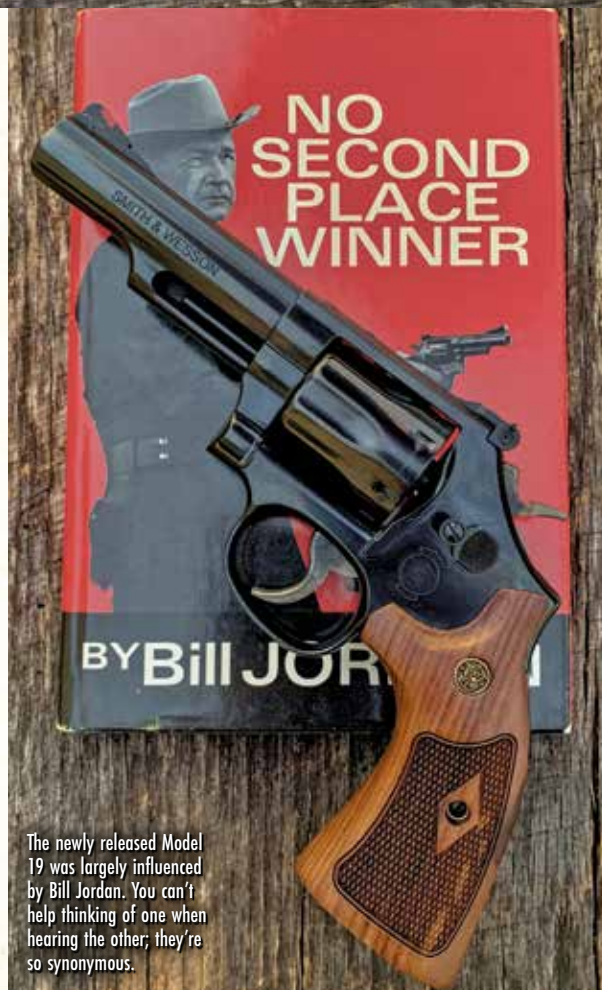
I shot from 50' using a sandbag rest. Typical groups ran 2" with most ammunition, proving these guns to be as accurate as their predecessors. Best accuracy was with Buffalo Bore Heavy .38 Special +P Outdoorsman ammo, which averaged 1.7" groups and clocked at 1,257 fps. My handloads using Lee full wadcutters loaded over 4.2 grains of Winchester 231 at 928 FPS averaged 2" for five shots.

Lost River +P 158-grain poly-coat bullets clocked at 1,178 FPS and routinely shot under 2" as well.

The Combat Magnum

This was the quintessential sidearm for Federal, State and local law daws in the mid-'50s and '60s.

The Combat Magnum design stems from U.S. Border Patrol agent Bill Jordan, who was also an exhibition



The newly released Model 19 was largely influenced by Bill Jordan. You can't help thinking of one when hearing the other; they're so synonymous.

trick shooter and gun writer. He had the idea of coming up with a smaller version of the large "N" frame guns capable of shooting .357 Magnum loads.

His philosophy entailed practicing with cheaper, easier recoiling .38 Special ammo and saving the .357 Magnum loads for duty carry. Border Patrol field agents, street cops and other badge carriers liked this idea, but especially liked carrying the lighter gun strapped on their hip during long tours of duty.

Jordan's idea was influenced by S&W's Model 15 Combat Masterpiece, which came out in 1949. By adding a bull barrel with an enclosed ejector rod

Nice close-up of the deep bluing, diamond checkered walnut target stocks, and smooth trigger face that come on the Model 19.



Below: The S&W Military and Police has been around since 1899 and has spawned generations of service guns for military, police and Federal agencies for well over 100 years.

housing and chambering it in .357 Magnum, you have the Combat Magnum.

Bill Jordan got his wish, and the Combat Magnum was released in 1955. Again, the gun's heritage can be traced back to the original Military & Police, which had been around since 1899. The K-Frame cylinder has a smaller turning radius than the larger N-Frames, so it cycles faster for quicker shooting.

The Combat Magnum's success spread to outdoormen who wanted a proper gun for carrying afield. Homeowners also liked the idea of having a "Combat Magnum" for protecting their family from intruders. In 1957, the Combat Magnum was called the Model 19.

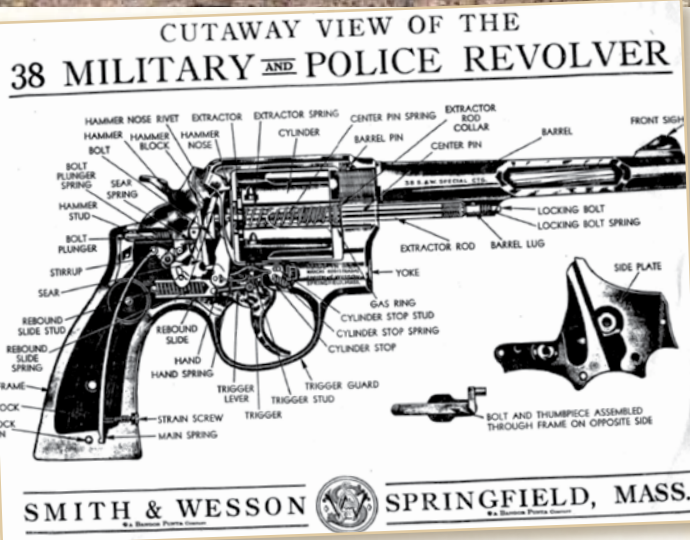
Today's 19

Once again, S&W reached deep into their bag of tricks by bringing us a gun anyone would be proud to own. The bluing is excellent, as are the checkered diamond target stocks made by TGW. The Model 19 has adjustable rear sights for fine-tuning sight-in for those participating in competition shooting or simply wanting to hit what they shoot at. The action is smooth and lock-up is tight.

Sights are pinned ramped front sight with red insert, with adjustable rear for both windage and elevation. Hammer and trigger are both color case hardened. The Combat Magnum has a heavyweight barrel with half lug, which houses the extractor rod.

Shooting

The adjustable sights made shooting more pleasant as the sight picture was that much better than the fixed sights of the Model 10. Buffalo Bore's Heavy .38 Special +P 20H/20 was used and



clocked out at an impressive 1,270 FPS with a 158-grain SWC bullet. Accuracy ran at 1.6" at 50'.

High Desert ammo's 148-grain HBWC ammo ran at 830 FPS and grouped under 2". Their 125-grain .38 Special clocked 916 fps with fine accuracy at 1.5". My handloads using Lee wadcutters loaded over 4.2 grains of 231 averaged 838 fps with groups going under 2".

The Chiefs Special

The Chiefs Special got its name during the 1950 meeting of the International Chiefs of Police. S&W reps held a contest for naming their new, smaller, 5-shot revolver, with the winner receiving a free gun with their name engraved on it. Chief Edward Boyko of Passaic, NJ, was the winner, coming up with the name "Chiefs Special." Pretty imaginative group, eh?

These small, "J" framed shooters are the handiest of all carry guns. They're easily carried concealed in ankle, belt, or shoulder holsters, or simply slipped in a coat or pants pocket.

As a wide-eyed rookie, I noticed our detectives and executive officers wearing these guns as badges of honor around the

station, exemplifying "the smaller the gun, the more important you were." Most carried their guns in cross-draw holsters.

Guys and gals carrying "J" frames don't feel shorted by having five shots; they know how to make each shot count and adjust tactics accordingly.

Today's 36

This latest rendition also has the vintage looks and the style any gumshoe "Dick" carried in the 1950s. The barrel is a short 1.88", with an integral half-moon front

sight and grooved top strap rear sight. Although made for close-quarters shooting, the gun can be shot accurately with practice. Full wadcutters loads at around 800 fps are perfect for such a gun, as the small grip-frame and light weight accentuate recoil.

The stocks are classic diamond checkered round-butt style. DA pull was 11 lbs., 3 oz., but smooth, while SA broke at just over 2 lbs. These guns are also rated for +P factory ammunition.

Shooting 2" groups at 10 yards is no problem with this gun, and going to 50', groups opened to around 3". Ammo used was High Desert 148-grain HBWC ammo. Their 125-grain .38 Special clocked 838 fps and shot around 2" at 10 yards.

Tools Of The Trade

As you can see, S&W revolvers played a huge role in keeping our country safe while in the hands of soldiers, peace officers, Federal agents and citizens. S&W did us a favor by letting us experience and relive the good old days with the newly released Classic guns, which are reminiscent of the times when a good man with a gun was respected and trusted.

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TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION



Frank could tell Nyah-Nyah wasn't satisfied with her marksmanship, so he informed her, "Your shooting is good enough to qualify for a Kentucky concealed deadly weapons permit." To which she replied, "I'm only 11 years old."

HOW I TRAINED MY KID

I knew this would be the year to teach my daughter to shoot a handgun. I've been laying the groundwork of responsible gun handling since she was 2 through grave parental warnings, imaginative playtime, laser indoor training simulators like the LaserLyte laser marksmanship trainer pistol and electronic target, and more recently familiarization with the actual manual of arms of real guns using Umarex's realistically operating CO₂ BB guns that have the slide function, safety controls and magazine releases that match the genuine guns they are modeled after.

It's Time ...

Last year, I could see she had reached the level of maturity, awareness and responsibility needed to make the decisions required to safely handle firearms.

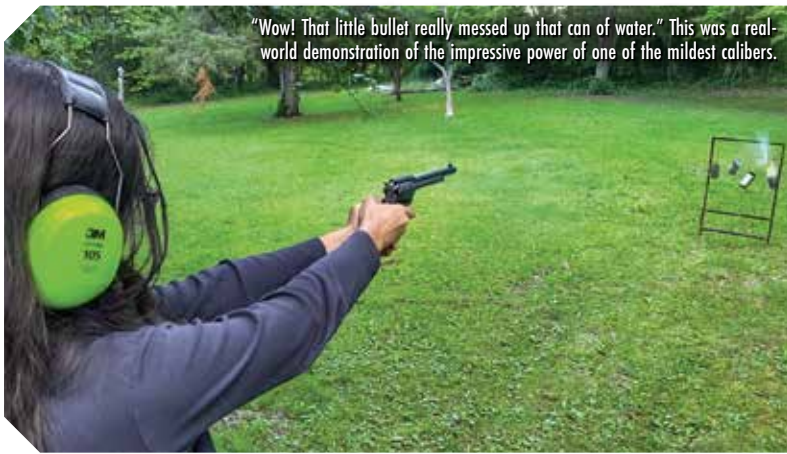
First shots! By starting new shooters from the bench, you let them focus on the mechanics of shooting rather than juggling gun, bullets, safety glasses and ear protection in the standing position.



FRANK JARDIM



New Shooter = Supervision required! Frank's daughter did great in her first 30-minute live-fire backyard shooting session. Years of casual preparation got her ready.



"Wow! That little bullet really messed up that can of water." This was a real-world demonstration of the impressive power of one of the mildest calibers.



After letting her shoot 30 rounds from the benchrest to get accustomed to the revolver and confirming she could hit what she aimed at, Frank let her try something more instantly gratifying ... tin cans filled with water.

This year, she's finally physically strong enough to operate a real-life handgun. When she fired her first bullets down-range, she did so fearlessly with an ease that seemed anti-climactic for me.

I was secretly disappointed later when she told me she neither liked nor disliked the experience, but I was impressed and pleased with the seriousness and attentiveness she went about it. I will give her more opportunities to shoot, at least monthly, and in doing so, she may eventually find something she enjoys. If she doesn't, that's okay. I will have accomplished my goal of making her, like my son, a

thoroughly competent marksman. I'm sure I can find a buyer for the brace of Trump 45 laser-engraved Desert Eagles I set aside for her.

Long-Term Planning

The long-term teaching approach I used with my kids allowed me to impart a lot of foundational shooting knowledge a little bit here and a little bit there, reinforcing it through repetition over the years, without my kids perceiving it as onerous. I blended the deadly serious with the fun and tried to keep it engaging so they would absorb rather than deflect the information. It seems to have worked well.

When a child is ready to safely handle and shoot firearms depends on the child's personality, intelligence, and level of development. It shouldn't be arbitrarily tied to their reaching any particular age. I believe my approach helped my kids reach that point sooner than they otherwise might have, and it definitely made for a safer household because firearms were demystified. They were taught they could look at any of the guns in our house, but could not touch them without permission and supervision. If they wanted to do more than look, all they had to do was ask.



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With the target set at 50 feet, daughter Nyah-Nyah uses a Caldwell Pistolero rest to steady the gun so she can focus on sight picture and trigger control.

With her cat in the background, Frank's daughter practices dry firing from the bench to familiarize herself with the operation and feel of the action and trigger pull.

Dealing with guns outside our house was addressed succinctly by the NRA's Eddie Eagle gun safety comic books. As a parent, I made their four key safety points (Stop. Don't touch. Leave the area. Tell an adult.) real-world important by calling my son and daughter in front of the television to watch news reports of actual tragedies when kids didn't follow these rules. I never let one of these accidental shootings go unmentioned. Each one is a cautionary tale, but the first one you share with your child is the most important. On YouTube, you'll find more local television news segments about this than the heart can bear. Survey them, pick one that will hit your child hard emotionally, and watch it with them. Discuss it with them. Plumb the depths of damage that a moment of carelessness caused to a mother, father, brother, sister, or friend. When they are crying, you've made the point you need to make, that nobody can call a bullet back once fired.

Opposing Forces

Working against gun safety around the clock, the fantasy world of television, movies and video games is con-

tinuously propagating misinformation about firearms. To my mind, the most dangerous are unsafe firearms handling and under-representing the power of firearms. I call that stuff out when I can without spoiling the fun of the show or game my kids were engaged with. With some TV shows, you can make a game of spotting unsafe gun handling with points for fingers on the trigger, sweeping, inadequate backstop, etc. Winner gets their choice of popcorn flavoring for the next family movie night.

In the real world, we have one, and only one, precious life. Video games seem to have devalued it by creating a fictional counter-narrative where we have more than one life. When we are killed in a game, often after suffering injuries of impossible frequency and magnitude, we just reappear at the spawn point and resume playing.

A thrilling and intellectually engaging corrective to this world-of-make-believe nonsense is to actually demonstrate the destructive power of a bullet to your kids. You can use YouTube, but it's best to do it for real. Show your kids how many boards a bullet will penetrate. Show them what hydrostatic shock can do to a body by turning a plastic jug of water inside out with a .357 Magnum. Smash a concrete block into fragments and dust with a single shot from a high-powered hunting rifle. Don't leave out the humble .22LR. To kids, it looks small

and harmless. Show them it can shoot through both sides of a tin can filled with water. They know their skin is not as hard as steel.

The Right Balance?

In teaching my kids, I was always concerned that if I spent too much time focused on the genuine and lethal dangers firearms present to kids, I might dissuade them from wanting to learn how to shoot at all. For balance, I insinuated shooting and gun safety into their playtime, where it was a natural fit. For my son, this was easy, since boys are still attracted to playing soldier and cops & robbers, both all the more fun since the invention of safe Nerf dart guns.

If your kids are playing with toy guns, it's your perfect opportunity to teach them real gun safety: When they pick up a cap gun, instruct them to keep it pointed in a safe direction and check to see if it is loaded. In a Nerf dart gun fight, teach them to know their target and what's behind by penalizing them for accidentally shooting the cat or stuffed animal bystanders. When playing dinosaur hunter in the woods, teach them to put their gun down when climbing over a fence. Imaginative play, when it involves some aspect of firearms, is an instructional opportunity. Just don't lean too heavily on the instruction at the expense of the play. Play is supposed to be fun. Be careful not to ruin it.

Personalize The Learning

To the extent my daughter wanted to do the same play activities my son did, I was able to teach them both at once. Once she started to develop her own feminine interests, I had to get more creative with my firearms instruction.

When Primary Weapons Systems made up miniature pewter M4 Carbine key chains, I brought home a dozen and the dolls of Barbie City armed up, learned safe storage and started practicing safe gun handling. With the dolls, we were able to explore through role-playing lots of firearms-



A lesson in why it's important to know what's beyond your target when shooting. Here, Frank's daughter observes gouges in the soil where her shot ricocheted off the surface ... and into the heavy forest behind the target stand.



"It's stinky!" Nyah-Nyah's least favorite part was the cleaning, though she found the comprehensive Otis Elite Pistol breech-to-muzzle cleaning kit intriguing.



Closing the range to 25 feet and switching to the standing position, Nyah-Nyah hit more tin cans than she missed. Here's where a lightweight gun really helped her.



Practicing the ejection ritual with the hammer at half cock to free the cylinder for hand rotation. The simplicity of a traditional SA revolver minimizes operator error risk. Retailing under \$200, the Heritage Manufacturing Rough Rider 22LR revolver is a good starter pistol for a new shooter.

related scenarios from the mundane to defense against mass zombie stuffed animal attacks. I knew my daughter was paying attention when I discovered my son's toy pistol (a nearly full-size orange plastic M1911) inside the awning above the cash register of the Hello Kitty restaurant play set she operated for a year in our living room. I discovered the toy pistol quite by accident while moving the playset. It turned out she had put it there and never mentioned it to anyone. When I asked her about it, she explained that she had hidden it there, "In case of trouble."

From age 5 to 8, my daughter was quite competitive with my son and wanted to do everything he did, which included shooting the laser training pistol indoors and BB guns outdoors. The BB guns were more readily incorporated into their play because a BB doesn't care what its target is. My son used it to snipe Dollar Store plastic army men attacking up the slopes of Bald Hill (my yard waste burn pile) with the defenders dug in around the peak. My daughter used the same BB gun to protect her dolls from a horde of miniature Dollar Store plastic mummies. (Pro-Tip: Tie a 12" string around the foot

of your miniature targets and thumb-tack the other end to a board to find and reset them quickly.) Laser and BB gun shooting helped my kids to develop the muscle memory of safe gun handling as well as proper grip, breathing, sight picture and trigger control.

By the time my kids were ready to start using real firearms, they were already quite familiar with the safety rules and basics of shooting, which permitted them to focus on learning the new manual of arms, and dealing with the report, recoil and



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GET MOTIVATED!



Chances are good the fanciest gun cabinet in the world begins life as some sort of box. If you own a decent square and take your time, you can make your first box perfectly square, which goes a long way toward success as you build on that basic box. It's also best to rough out some dimensions and build ideas before you start to cut. Roy started with good quality sanded 3/4" ply from Home Depot.

Finished and in the place it was designed for in Roy's office. It holds a handful of guns he likes to keep handy, along with a bit of ammo and accessories on the top shelves. He put two stainless "J-hooks" on the side to hold muffs and glasses at hand. There's no reason you couldn't put locks on the glass doors if you like or change the design to match your space and needs. The lighter color inside helps to make the light show off the contents. Roy found the simple colors of revolutionary-era American furniture and home interiors almost always make pleasing combinations.

I've had several "store-bought" gun cabinets, and frankly, I've been disappointed in each of them. Unless you spend in the thousands, you get casual construction at best in a stapled, particle board build with "Genuine Veneer" (stick-on wood grain?), plexiglass door fronts and a cabinet at the bottom you can't reach and won't open easily anyway. After a short time, the seams start to open, the vinyl begins to peel, and you're left with that bad taste you hate to have. This is the sort of furniture you see at the curb eventually, with "Free" scrawled on a torn piece of cardboard stuck to them.

Short of a custom build of real wood or stumbling onto an actual gun cabinet in a good furniture store (good luck there), the



Corners can be simple butt joints (the two pieces simply butted together with glue and good screws) or something like this, with a rabbit one, so the other piece sits on it. This offers better support and more glue surface. You could make this with a cheap router easily. Can you say Harbor Freight tools?



Roy cheats by using these cool corner holders during assembly. They help to keep things aligned if you're working alone. Note how the side of the cabinet nestles into the bottom. After test-fitting, it's time for glue and the nail gun.



Double-checking square is critical. If you make a 1/16" mistake in a couple of spots, suddenly, you're at 1/8" or more off as the build continues. Pretty soon, you have a 1/4" gap somewhere. Take the time to make it right.



Roy used dados to keep things tidy for the main shelf. A router makes quick work of these or, better yet, dado blades on a table saw. Just use a good straight edge and measure, measure, measure before you cut. Don't assume the plywood really is 3/4", for instance, because many are just under or over. And remember, YouTube is your friend for learning how to do many of these things.



It's starting to look like something at this point. Note the bar clamp to hold the sides tight while the shelf glue dries. If you look carefully, you can see a rabbit (ledge) around the top. That will allow the back piece to be recessed neatly. More on that soon.



A simple nail gun (think: \$100) and a small compressor really makes things move faster and more smoothly. It's easy to hold a part in place and anchor it with a few key nails. You can also add screws then without worrying about parts shifting.



Here, you can see how a back panel will sit. Note the top panel sits neatly on the back edge of the shelf, hiding the joint. This allowed Roy to use smaller pieces and make good use of off-cuts. These are things you usually learn from the school of hard knocks. "Hey, I forgot that seam would show!" Oops.



Here's a close-up of that rabbit. In Britain, it's called a "rebate," which might explain it better. A dado blade in a table saw, or router can do such magic things easily.



The top panel is home, while the bottom needs glue, then the nail gun once it's seated. Once the back goes on, it really strengthens the case. Keep in mind you could also just simply glue/nail the back panel right on the edges of the sides instead of cutting that rabbit. But the rabbit adds strength and hides the edge of the plywood.



Roy's go-to glue is Titebond III. It's waterproof, sets up fast but not so fast you don't have time to assemble things and is thick enough to stay in place when you apply it. He even builds cutting boards and outdoor furniture with it.



Sitting things upright allows you to get a good eye on things. Once the case is built, there's also no reason you can't change or add features at this point. Note the bottom cross-piece is in place, strengthening the bottom.

best route is to just suck it up and build one yourself. Before you panic thinking of your dull-bladed skillsaw, dead-battered electric drill and cluttered garage floor, regroup and keep an open mind here. Even someone with modest tool skills (and aw sharp blade in that skillsaw) can drum up some semblance of a custom gun cabinet to meet their particular needs.

Remember, this is just a box, that's all. Once you make a box using the best big box home store's plywood you can find, the rest is just decoration and paint, followed by that self-satisfied grin when you see it in the flesh.

Shop Time

Okay, I'm blessed with some hard-earned skills and a shop of good tools like a table saw, routers, jointer, planers and more. But I started doing all this with a skillsaw, hand drill, a couple of



If you were to just sit the case on the floor, it would look awkward and heavy. It's better to lift things a bit with legs of some sort to make it seem lighter and more professional looking. Roy opted to try out a new technique he saw on a YouTube's woodworking channel for the legs.



Roy used a mitre saw to cut the top angles of the legs. Keep your brain going thinking about safety while working with all the tools. Never make a cut without glasses and ear protection (if it's noisy). And wear even a simple dust mask when sawing or sanding. The glue residue and some sawdust can be toxic. Really toxic!



Roy made a plywood template to transfer the curve for the leg bottoms to all four legs to keep them consistent. Never hesitate to use a template or to even make a sample build of something using cheap wood to test fit the ideas and design. Then use the "real" wood for the final build.



Here's a leg marked and ready to cut. Note the pin holes from the nails used to hold things together while the glue set. Titebond III sets up in about an hour for handling, but keeping things clamped or nailed/screwed is best because final set-up takes about 24 hours to make sure of things.



A bevel at the top of the legs is there simply to make things look nice. A flat top would look blocky.



While the final legs look complicated, they actually weren't. Here's the basic glue-up before Roy trimmed the bottoms to shape. This is where having a nail gun comes in handy. Hold the parts together while you tack them with the gun. Titebond III is extremely strong, and often the nail gun is used just to hold things in place until the glue sets up. Roy's found most joints will fail in the wood grain rather than the glue joint.



A bandsaw makes short work of the gentle curves. It took a bit for Roy to get his head around these two cuts but once he did the first it all made perfect sense. It's amazing how a simple design feature can add a great deal to a project.



A simple belt sander like you'd use to sand a flat panel works great for sanding curves. Just turn it upside down and put it in a vise or clamp to hold it in place. Here the leg bottoms get smoothed.



Those two curved cuts meet at the leg's bottom turning what would have been simple, flat bottoms into something much more elegant. This shows the rough cuts, and it will all need to be final sanded before assembly.

good straight edges and drywall screws. I added things as my skills grew (can you say nail gun?) and each time I tackled a project I didn't think I could do, I found I could — eventually. And so can you.

What we have here is a gun cabinet I made for my home office. I like to keep a few guns handy to deal with varmints, "emergency" plinking events, some small-lot ammo storage of handy calibers and simply because I like the company of a few good guns. I gave this one some thought regarding the design, and so far, it's played out well. Note the staggered top shelves. Having the top one shorter allows you to see what's there and prevents that dark cave of forgotten goodies so often happening in drawers and cabinets of such things.

Let's take this on in a step-by-step tour. Keep in mind this is just to give you some ideas and get your blood going. For your own first build, you could simplify things, change dimensions as needed, do away with the glass front and use wood and even think about using a pre-built kitchen-style pantry cabinet as the basic "box," which you can then modify and add to as needed. A bit of trim, some good paint or stain, and you're about there. Other than that final slightly smug smile as you admire your handiwork,  that is! Just do it, as they say.



The legs took a bit of time, and once they were finished, Roy used his jointer (a machine to make wood flat) to make sure all four were spot-on. You could do the same thing with a good hand-held bench plane. The only real thing machine tools do for a woodworker is speed things up but can also help to make very accurate cuts if you do your part.



All four legs ready to install. This is a good time to reinforce how important accurate measurements and cuts are. If there was something skewed on the legs, it might affect how they fit on the case or if the cabinet eventually sits level or not.



Some careful measurements of rifles and shotguns revealed a good distance for the muzzle cut-outs. Roy used the bottom of a spray can for the round portion and the angles allow the guns to nest neatly.



Test fitting assured things worked as they should. The bottom corner of the case sits on the "shelf" built into the leg.



Glue and pin nails hold things in place. You can make sure the nail heads are just beneath the surface. If they don't go quite in, then fill with wood filler and sand for final finishing. Roy elected to paint the cabinet, but if you were going to use stain, you'd need to be careful about using fasteners where they might show. In most cases, simply using glue and clamps will be fine.



In the spirit of "what the heck," Roy did a bit of carving on the trim piece just below the top door. The shapes were random, but you'll see it really added a nice touch once things were painted and in place.



Here's a detail of the leg top showing that angled cut. It's the sort of simple design element helping to please the eye.



Painted-up, the legs looked swell. Note how the routed grooves catch the light, creating shadows, and the angled top reflects light differently than the surface of the legs. All great for looks — and simple to do.



Store-bought molding created a nice cap for the cabinet. Roy combined square and rounded stock on top of each other for this look. It's easy, fun and can really change the looks of a project. Anytime your eye is forced to pause on a part of the project, it's likely due to what's called a "reveal," a line of light or dark shadow created by an overhang, groove, angle or cut helping to break up the monotony of things. Imagine if Roy had just left this as a square box. Boring ...



Nearing final assembly at this point. Note how it's all just boxes within boxes, along with a few accent pieces. Roy needs to do a final sanding before painting. At this point, he had the final measurements for the openings, so arranged to have glass cut to fit. It's always good to wait until the case is finished in case you've had to change anything during construction. The glass was installed using special hardware from a place like Rockler or Woodcraft.



Small grooves were routed in the fronts of the legs just for a bit of eye-candy. A few small touches like this can really help to set a project apart. Building simple cabinets for the garage is one thing, but something to hold your favorite guns deserves a better look.

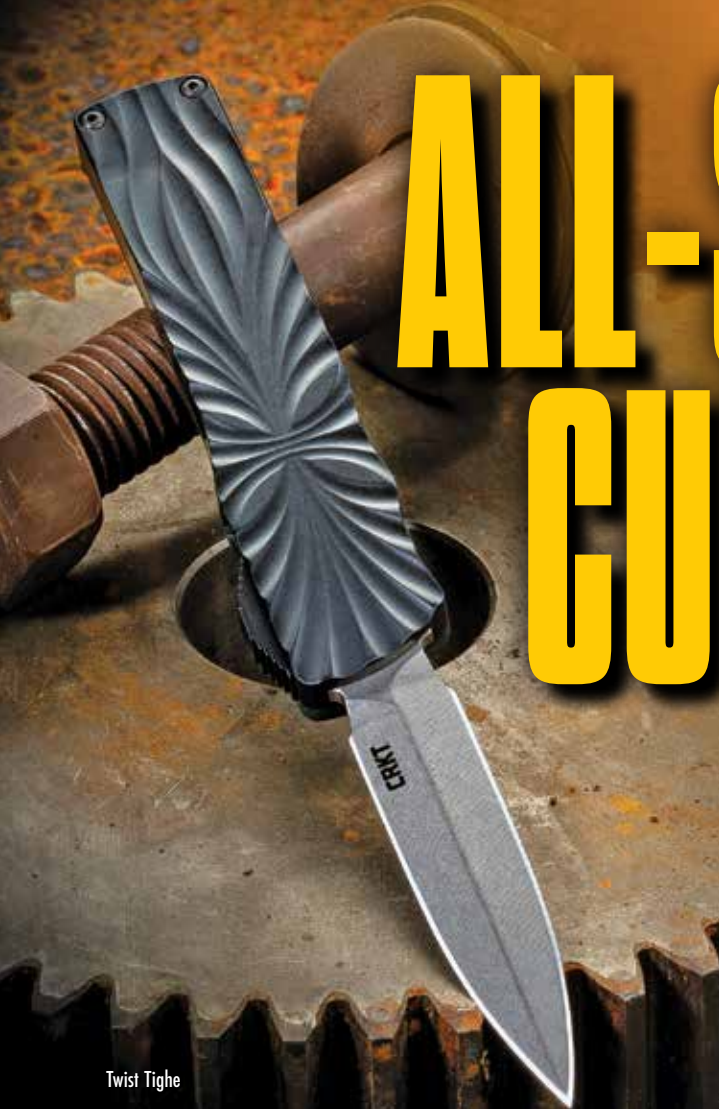


Once painted, the carving invited shadows which made the relief pop. Don't be afraid to experiment. In this case, if the carving hadn't worked, Roy could have replaced that cross piece or simply filled the carving in and sanded it flush again.



Ready for the final install of the muzzle cut-outs, which were lined with felt and painted outside the cabinet. At that point, Roy installed the pre-cut glass panels and had to make an on-the-run change using spacers to get things to fit right. Don't be surprised if you need to make a running change sometimes. And remember, it's not a mistake, it's a "Design Element!" Roy also mounted hidden lights in the gun portion at this point.

ALL-STAR CUTS!



Twist Tighe



Bamboozled

PAT COVERT
PHOTOS: ROB JONES/
THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

OVER THREE DECADES DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST



Twist Tighe
(Opposite side)

CRKT

Columbia River Knife & Tool, or “CRKT” as they’re commonly known, has been in business for over 30 years, and it’s hard to believe the knife company is that old. The reason is they’ve managed to keep things fresh all these years, and there’s a good reason for that: CRKT has collaborated with top custom knife-makers from their very start. Big names like Kit Carson, Ken Onion and Michael Walker were all early big-name design collaborators for the company, and all are currently in the company’s catalog. Many newer, younger custom knifemakers have joined the company with collaborations since and for CRKT, the world keeps going round and round, just as it started.

Kommer’s Cutters

Russ Kommer is a hunting guide and outdoorsman from Fargo, ND, who has been contributing to the CRKT line since

the late 1970s. CRKT chose Russ’ Soldotna fixed-blade, named for a town on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska, to celebrate their 30th anniversary. The Soldotna is a Drop Point Skinner 7.63” in overall length with a 3.48” 1095 Carbon Steel full tang blade sporting a Gray Cerakote finish. The Soldotna’s 4.15” handle has Brown Micarta scales with a tube brass-lined lanyard hole. The company also offers a limited edition run of 400 with a Damascus blade and Walnut scales. For more on this classy knife, we featured the Soldotna in the January issue of my *Knives* column in FMG’s *GUNS Magazine*.

The Kommer Kalisof was designed as a companion to the Soldotna. This slim 8.63” fixed-blade is designed for skinning small game and detail work where a thinner blade is required. The Kalisof’s 3.87” blade has a Gray Cerakote finish, and the trim cutter has Brown Micarta scales like its Soldotna

brother. The Kalisof stands ready for bird and trout duty or as a detailing companion for your larger Skinner.

A Feast of Folders

With model names like Squid and Tuna, custom knifemaker Lucas Burnley of Bend, Ore., definitely has a sense of humor, but when it comes to sales, his knives are seriously hot. Burnley's collaborations are already in several iterations for CRKT, a sure sign of the popularity of designs. His Tuna Compact Frame Lock is a small pocketable EDC, what the maker calls "post tactical," with flair aplenty and features out the wazoo. An anodized Titanium handle, upscale S35VN stainless steel blade, and Reeve Integral Lock frame are features of which customs are made, and the Tuna Compact can be had much more affordably. The folder's blade dimensions are 6.53" fully extended, 3.80" closed, and the deep-ground Drop Point blade is 2.76". There's a pocket clip out back, and at 2.70 oz., the Tuna Compact is a very friendly tote.

The Squid is a small but stout bit of business that's been upgraded to a push-button lock model. This type of blade lock has been gaining in popularity on production folders over the past year, and it makes for a cleaner, less cluttered design. A small "gents" size folder like the Tuna Compact, the Squid Button Lock, is sized at 5.70" overall and 3.47" folded. The Squid's 2.27" Spear Point blade is made of workman-like D2 Steel and is accessed via healthy ambidextrous thumb studs. Total weight is 2.60 oz.

The Bamboozled is a folder designed by the son of highly lauded knifemaker and longtime CRKT collaborator Ken Onion, who gave us the assisted opener mechanism. Ken Onion Jr. is carrying on his father's tradition with the Bamboozled folder, his first collaboration with CRKT. This cleanly designed folder, 7.75" fully opened, features a slick assisted opening mechanism that rolls out smooth and fast on a speedy IKBS ball-bearing pivot system. The D2 Steel blade is 3.31" of fully ground Drop Point heaven and is deployed by a cutout, understated rectangular flipper. A liner-lock mechanism keeps the blade rigidly affixed when fully deployed. The 4.45" handle has a Barlow-strength bolster with black G10 composite scales. Tan G10/Black steel plus All-Black versions are also available. Out back is a pocket clip for carry, and total weight for the Bamboozled is an easy EDC of 4.0 oz.

Tour de Force!

We've saved the firepower for last. Knifemaker Brian Tighe is a seasoned Canadian custom knifemaker well known in the U.S. for his edgy design prowess of all types of knives from



Squid



fixed-blades to folders and, in this case, automatics. Brian has been in the CRKT stable of collaborators for many years, and his new Tighe Twist Compact Auto, an OTF (out-the-front) automatic, is his latest design for CRKT.

The first thing that grabs you with the Tighe Twist is not that it's an auto, but its wild exploding paint scheme on the back side of the handle. Available in Green, Red and Black flavors, the splashy design literally jumps off the handle. The "twist" is that the front side frame is a solid sinister black. Once your eyes adjust, the fact that it's an exquisite automatic emerges. The Tighe Twist's closed length is 4.01", and once the blade is activated, the total length extends to 6.78". The blade is delivered in the blink of an eye by thumbing forward a slide release located on the upper rear side of the handle. To re-seat the blade inside the handle, simply slide the thumb release downward. The Twist has a Dagger blade style 2.69" long, made of upscale MagnaCut stainless steel — literally the hottest steel on today's market for both the fixed-blade and folding type.

Before buying a CRKT knife, I recommend visiting the company's website listed below. You can search by your favorite knifemakers or brands, and often you will find variants in models, size, color variations, and blade styles you may like even more ... but be prepared to sit a spell.  It's a feast for the eyes!

For more info: CRKT.com



Tuna Compact



Soldatino

JOEY

Fried chicken, potato salad, green beans slathered in bacon grease, fresh homemade rolls, pecan pie and sweet tea. Gallon upon gallon of sweet tea. The intoxicating odor of this mystical combination smells like church, family and love to me.

Joey looked like a Weeble. He seemed about as wide as he was tall, with generous glasses and an intellectual demeanor. For those not of my generation, a Weeble was a children's toy back in the 1970s. They were basically indestructible plastic eggs with some kind of figure painted on the side that were weighted slightly at the bottom. Their catchphrase was, "Weebles wobble, but they don't fall down." Joey looked a bit like that.

Joey was a natural peacemaker. I was the President of my med school class. Don't be impressed with that. Somebody had to do it, and I apparently fled slower than everybody else. It fell to me to adjudicate problems.

A couple of my maturity-impaired classmates were overheard making fun of one of my female comrades based on her size. The old Army me bubbled up, and I confronted them both, ready to apply a little frontier justice. Joey physically stepped between us and assured me he would take care of it quietly. He did.

Genesis

Gross Anatomy is the starting point for every physician on the planet. No matter if you are the most esteemed world-renowned neurosurgeon or the local doc-in-a-box, everybody starts there. The experience is at once wondrous and horrifying.

They say your med school cadaver is your first real patient, and that is not an inaccurate statement. I know stuff about that lady that she didn't. There is a near-spiritual intimacy there.



We called our cadaver Berniece. Within the first week, they all have names. Berniece was a skinny lass who smoked and clearly died of heart disease. I once was in the course director's office and inadvertently saw Berniece's real name. I immediately wished I hadn't. Things worked better if she just stayed Berniece.

Gross Anatomy is at once dehumanizing and profoundly human. On the first day of Gross, everybody gets a bit green, whether they admit it or not. By the end of the first week, you could murder a pizza in the place. The human animal can acclimate to most anything.

One day, we were called upon to disarticulate the hips. That was about as much fun as it sounds and was also fairly messy. While I was struggling to get Berniece to part with her lower extremities, I looked up and saw Joey. He was marching across the gross lab, grinning madly with a human leg thrown jauntily over his shoulder. He looked like some ghoulish Oompa Loompa from *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. I will carry that image to the grave.

The Event

Joey wanted to be an OB/GYN, and he would have been magnificent at it. His physical presence and general demeanor were utterly disarming. Women trusted him. He had a gift.

During the fourth year of med school, you interview for residency. I had my family established, so I didn't interview anywhere except the hospital where I had already trained. Joey, by contrast, traveled to Hershey, Penn., to vie for a residency spot.

The weather was bad. There was a traffic accident. Joey was killed. I will never forget that phone call. It left me physically ill.

Joey was from a tiny little Mississippi crossroads in the middle of no place. All 100 of his classmates carpooled out for the service. We all fought back tears, some more successfully than others.

Joey got into med school on his third try. His sister had a chronic illness, and this drove his passion. They read the extraordinary essay from his application to med school at the funeral. It was agonizing to hear.

When the service wrapped up, we filed by to hug Joey's mom and took a peek into his bedroom. They lived right next to the church, and she had left it just as it had been when he grew up. He was such a great kid.

The drive back to the med school was nearly two hours. We were all hungry and emotionally spent. The pastor of the little church insisted on our coming through the fellowship hall before we left.

There we found a simply breathtaking Southern feast. The ladies of that tiny church had pulled together enough food to feed all 100 of us a couple times over. Across those eight-foot folding tables were mashed potatoes, English peas, macaroni casserole, and hand-tossed salad, but it was so much more than that. There was love there, in simply breathtaking quantities, all of it wrapped around the remarkably brief life of an extraordinary young man. 

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YOU CAN BECOME A GUNSMITH!

AMERICAN GUNSMITHING INSTITUTE

Sir, please step away from the Dremel.” Ever heard these words? Maybe you’ve never even risked that conversation, and avoided working on your guns out of fear or an abundance of caution.

Here’s the thing. Sometimes it makes sense to break out the Dremel (or some other) tool. Part of the trick is knowing when it’s the right tool for the right job. The more important part is learning about how guns work and how to work on them, before breaking out any tools.

Good news! If you or your special someone likes to tinker, you can spare those embarrassing trips to the gunsmith with a Ziploc bag full of parts to “fix” the home repair or customization job. You can embark on the journey of learning gunsmithing skills right in the comfort of your own home. You can even become a certified gunsmith.

Enter American Gunsmithing Institute.

GUN “MECHANICS”

Lots of us don’t hesitate to learn how to perform basic maintenance and upgrades on cars. There are just shy of 285 million vehicles of all types, including about 100 million passenger cars, in the United States, so it arguably makes sense to learn how to do some level of “carsmithing” work ourselves. How many of you wouldn’t hesitate to change the oil or replace a failed starter?

But guess what? There are somewhere around 450 million firearms in the U.S. That’s a lot of mechanical gear that needs care and feeding. Think basic stuff like general repair, customizing handguns, rifles and shotguns, accurizing, building and assembling, refinishing, restoration of that family heirloom and more.

Whether you want to evolve gunsmithing skills into a hobby or business, there’s no shortage of work to be done. Just check the wait list times for good gunsmiths. Many are backlogged for ... *not weeks or months, but years.*

YOUR FIRST BENCH

The beauty of the gunsmithing skillset is you can start your journey right at home. Garage, basement, or if your significant other is the more understanding type, that spare bedroom. With just six feet of bench space and a starter-level assortment of hand tools, you can accomplish many things. Of course, save the chemical work for outdoor workspaces!

As you grow your skills and capabilities (and maybe customer base?), you can start to add dedicated power equipment like mills or lathes. You’d be surprised at what you can find in the new benchtop market or scrounging surplus and estate sale opportunities.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

The first step, even before laying out your bench, is the education process. If you’re already gainfully employed or aren’t in a position to head off to a few years of gunsmithing school and apprenticeship, you can begin right at home on nights and weekends.

The team at American Gunsmithing Institute has developed self-study, video-based course curricula that won’t leave you lacking in deep understanding. That’s because AGI has created a training system that teaches Firearms Design, Function, Repair (D, F & R) and advanced Customizing. This is a key point. Without in-depth understanding of design and function, you’ll just be a surface-level “parts swapper” as the AGI folks like to say. By knowing the design intent and detailed operational characteristics, you’ll more confidently be able to diagnose, repair and refine. This is what separates the gunsmiths from the “parts swappers.”

How? American Gunsmithing Institute has invested countless hours and dollars in teaching with cutaway guns, with close-up operation views and explanations.

PROOF IS IN THE GRADUATES

AGI is run and staffed by professional gunsmiths with over 400 years of combined experience. And that team has been teaching virtually since 1993 — over 32 years and counting.

As the courses are delivered virtually, you can proceed at your own pace. To facilitate the remote learning process, the company offers four levels of gunsmithing instruction, ranging from Professional Gunsmithing Level 1 through Professional Gunsmithing Advanced Master Level. If you’re in it as a hobby, enroll in the Practical Gunsmithing program. You’ll also find some separate tracks for core skills like welding and machine shop.

And don’t worry, you won’t be left in the cold. The innovative virtual teaching model includes 7x24 support through online forums and the Gunsmithing Club of America. And if you just need some extra help, you can sign up for an optional hands-on class component.

GET BUSY!

You can get certified in Design, Function, and Repair, Gunsmithing (D, F & R). Don’t be a parts swapper! Start your journey by visiting AGI’s website and requesting an information package.

If you plan on turning your evolving skillset into a business, AGI will also teach you how to handle the business aspects, like getting your FFL and running a successful gunsmithing business.



More info: AmericanGunsmithingInstitute.net and GunsmithingClubOfAmerica.com/



TOM McHALE



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SCAN TO ENTER



A compact-sized polymer-framed pistol, the *Palmetto Dagger with Carry Cuts* introduces game-changing ergonomics and controllability. Made from high-quality stainless steel and advanced polymers, this pistol lives up to today's highest expectations while maintaining the unmatched Palmetto State Armory value. The PSA Dagger SWRV2 Slide features milled windows on the top corners of the slide, as well as a gator mouth-like concave cut to the front of the slide to create an enhanced look and feel, to the already distinguished design of the PSA Dagger, while also reducing the overall weight of your pistol.

Practice using your Palmetto Dagger handgun with *Infinity Targets*. The durable and precision-made targets are for shooting enthusiasts and professionals alike. Use them for casual backyard practice as well as professional training to enhance accuracy and the training experience.

Don't let the "everyday" in "everyday carry" convince you the Provoke EDC is just another folding knife. This blacked out version sports a drop point blade made from D2 steel for edge retention. A lightweight aluminum handle allows it to ride comfortably in a pocket. Nudge the upper crossbar with your thumb while the rest of your fingers firmly grasp the handle and the blade lunges to life and locks into place. Shift the discreet lever at the base of the finger loop and the blade retreats into its closed position.

These prizes will enable you to defend yourself should the need arises. Join now to win! Go to AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways! You can send a post card too! —Jazz Jimenez

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CALIBER: 9MM; CAPACITY: 15; BARREL LENGTH: 4.9"; OAL: 7.15"

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MUST READS



Each one of these books is a must read for everyone.

THE INSIDER: Roy Huntington's *Insider* columns from *American Handgunner*, niftily secured in one spot, the culmination of over 120 episodes. After 20 years as editor, read what he has said over the years. **\$34.00**

SHOOTING IRON: A complete collection of Mike "Duke" Venturino's *Shooting Iron* column originally published in *American Handgunner* from 2005 through 2024. Venturino's extensive gun knowledge and easy-reading writing style entertained and informed a generation of readers. **\$24.95**

ODD ANGRY SHOT: John Connor's *Odd Angry Shot* content was first published in *GUNS Magazine* from 2002 to 2018. John's unique views of life outside the ordinary and socially correct, entertained a generation of enthusiasts. **\$24.75**

BEST OF SMITH & WESSON: Both *American Handgunner* and *GUNS Magazine* have showcased *S&W* products on their covers and in their pages, literally thousands of times over the decades. This book includes all the guns featured between 2010 and 2019. **\$34.95**

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ARMED CITIZENS THREE, MULTIPLE BANK ROBBERS ZERO

SITUATION: Multiple armed gang members rob a bank and trigger a shootout they won't live to regret.

LESSON: Good guys with guns, skill and tactics can be more than a match for hardcore criminals.

Those who read the history of America's Old West frontier are aware of the stories. In 1876, the dreaded Jesse James/Cole Younger Gang was shot to pieces by armed citizens who decisively thwarted the gang's bank raid in Northfield, Minn. In 1892, armed citizens did the same when the Dalton Gang found that Coffeyville, Kansas, wasn't the best venue for armed bank robbery, either.

Fewer people today are familiar with a similar incident that took place in Meeker, Colo., in 1896. Let's examine that incident.

The Incident Begins

October 3, 1896, approximately 3:00 p.m. Approaching from the south along the White River, four horsemen ride into the town of Meeker, dismounting in a corral for freight wagons behind the J.W. Hugus & Company building. The Hugus establishment is a central part of the town. It is a large general store, and it encompasses a bank. One of the men, Joe Rolls, remains with the horses. The other three make entry into the Hugus establishment.

The trio hasn't come to shop at the general store part of the building.

Once inside, they make their way to the bank and enter. All are in their 20s, and all are known by different names. Billy Smith, who sometimes answers to Pierce, is nicknamed — perhaps has nicknamed himself — “The Kid.” One of the men with him is known variously as Jim Shirly and Charles Jones. The third, George Harris, is sometimes called Bain. Pierce takes a position near the front door, and Shirly places himself at the side entrance.

Clerk Joe Rooney, who works at a local hotel, makes a deposit and becomes the last patron of the day to do routine bank business before the robbers open the action. A lady named Mrs. Wildhack attempts to enter but is turned away by The Kid.

And now it goes down.

Shots Fired

Harris takes the lead. He goes directly to assistant cashier David Smith. Shirly shouts for everyone to raise their hands, and, unprovoked, Harris fires a shot past the assistant cashier's head.

Stunned, the bank employee is temporarily frozen in place. Robber Harris fires another shot past him, accompanied by demands for money.

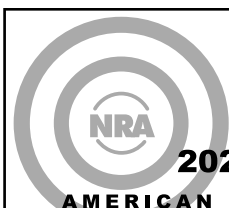
The robbers have made their first mistake.

Rallying Cry

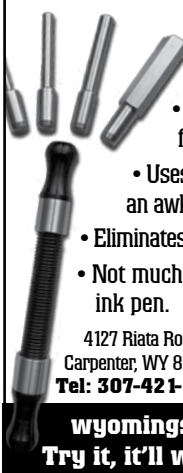
The gunshots are, of course, heard throughout the Hugus building and outside on the street. Meeker citizen Phil Barnhart is about to enter the bank when he perceives what is happening. He runs outside shouting, “Get your guns, the bank is being robbed!” C.J. Duffy and Tom Shervin join in spreading the alarm.

In the real American West of the 1890s, the general populace didn't walk around all wearing six-guns like in later movies and TV shows, but firearms were often within reach.

Continued on next page



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An ad hoc band of armed citizens begins to gather outside. Newspapers of the time will describe them as being armed with rifles, shotguns and revolvers.

The stage for confrontation was set.

Grabbing The Money

Finding the vault door locked, the frustrated robbers take Hugus company manager, A.C. Moulton, at gunpoint, exclaiming, "Here, Mister Cashier, we want you!" They command him to open the vault. Moulton will later describe the gun barrel pointed at his face as "big enough to sleep in." He obeys.

One of the robbers has brought a bag later described as a "sugar sack." They begin filling it with cash. Most accounts will later list the amount taken as \$1,600, the equivalent of over \$55,000 today.

Perhaps deciding that they needed insurance, the gang decides to take everyone in the bank with them as human shields. At gunpoint, hands in the air, the hapless victims file outside with their criminal captors.

Shootout!

As the gang and their human shields exited the building, they had to see the ad hoc militia of armed citizens pointing guns in their direction. The hostages, of course, will have seen the same thing.

The first gunshot victim of the event is Bill Clark, who divides his time between being a deputy game warden and a schoolteacher. He is in the latter role when he hears the two gunshots in his nearby classroom, orders his students to stay put, and runs to the scene. One of the robbers shoots him in the right side of the chest. He is now out of the fight, and the shooting does not go unnoticed by the array of armed citizens.

This does not go unnoticed by the hostages, either. The manager of the Hugus store will later tell the *Meeker Herald* newspaper that he and his fellow hostages were "getting tired of holding their hands in the air." So, then, he and several others break and run.

At which time, the robbers, who at that moment still have time to surrender peacefully and save their lives, sign their death warrant.

It happened like this:

"The Kid" is the first to fire at the hostages. Victor Dykeman, an employee of the bank, takes a harmless bullet through his hat and a painful hit or two in one arm. C.A. Booth, a clerk, suffers a grazing scalp wound. W.P. Herrick, another hostage, has one finger traumatically amputated from his hand by a bullet. The line has been crossed. The armed citizens return fire with deadly accuracy.

Charles Jones and William Smith are the first to fall, at about the same time. "The Kid" falls with five bullets in him — down, done, and dead. There will be no forensic investigation as to whose bullets went where, but one historical account holds that all five of those bullets were fired by a single sharpshooting armed citizen named Ben Nichols.

Almost simultaneously, a bullet center-punches the heart of the robber Shirly, who instantly collapses and dies. The fatal shot has been fired by an armed citizen named Simp Hart.

The last of the bandits to fall is George Harris, whom Simp Hart shot in the back as he was trying to flee. He lived for some two hours, during which he named his partners in crime, though many believe he gave false names. His last words before he falls silent forever are "Oh! Mother!"

They command him to open the vault. Moulton will later describe the gun barrel pointed at his face as 'big enough to sleep in.' He obeys.

One of the gunmen, as he goes down mortally wounded, empties his revolver at the crowd while falling and while on the ground. He hits no one. Interestingly, different sources attribute this last act of defiance variously to Harris and "The Kid."

The shootout has taken only seconds.

The One Who Got Away

Most accounts of this incident mention only the three men who entered the bank, drew guns, and carried out the robbery and the hostage-taking. Only the aforementioned historian Tom Clavin seems to consider the fourth gang member, Joe Rolls, who gave a new meaning to the old saying, "hold your horses."

Behind the building, he was out of sight, out of mind, and out of the line of fire of the armed citizen rescuers, none of whom would have been in a position to even know he was there. Hearing the gunfire and astutely figuring out what was going on and what his and his fellow criminals' chances were, he jumped in the saddle and "got out of Dodge." He was never arrested or charged for the attempted robbery and attempted homicides that took place that day in Meeker, Colo. Clavin describes him as a man who had been

no more than a horse thief and a poor one at that prior to the attempted holdup, and Clavin found no record of him ever committing any crime more risk-prone than horse theft thereafter.

"The Rest Of The Story"

Tom Clavin is one of my favorite contemporary historians of the Western frontier. In his 2024 book *Bandit Heaven: the Hole-in-the-Wall Gangs and the Final Chapter of the Wild West*, he explains the would-be bank robbers who went to Meeker were amateurs — "wannabes" who had taken Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid as role models. It turned out they were a very poor imitation of the real Wild Bunch. He describes them as a "Junior Wild Bunch" who had been entranced by stories of Butch and Sundance's derring-do and rich plunder from the banks and trains they had robbed.

They were, in essence, imitating the role models their bad judgment had led them to choose. Their poor imitation of a glamorized 19th-century version of what today is called "thug life" ultimately cost three-fourths of them their lives and led to the wounding of four innocent victims.

Casualty Count

A casualty count depends on what those counting consider a casualty. In this incident, if you look at just the fatalities, the final score was "Good Guys 3, Bad Guys 0." If you look at who got hurt, all three actual Bad Guy robbers were killed and none wounded, but there were four innocent people hurt by the gunfire. While some have suggested the misnomer "friendly fire" caused some of those wounds, that seems bogus: The consensus of reporters at the time and historians later is that all wounds on innocents were inflicted by the criminal gunmen, not the righteous rescuers. One man's lost finger was actually the only permanent wound. It appears the hostage shot in the arm recovered completely. The graze wound on another's scalp was inconsequential. And the part-time lawman shot in the chest, the first of the innocents to be hit? Fortunately, it appears to have been an "adynamic wound," that is, one that did not incapacitate or threaten life. Reports indicate the warden/teacher was a very heavy-set man, and the bullet seems to have simply passed through a fat roll on the side of his chest. He was said to have remarked afterward that if he had lost 50 lbs. before the shooting, the bullet wouldn't have hit him at all.

This was a much better casualty ratio in favor of the Good Guys than any such "armed citizens versus bank robbers" case I have researched. In the Northfield Bank Raid, the robbers killed three civilians while the armed

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citizens killed two of the band, Clell Miller and Bill Stiles, and wounded all the remaining perpetrators, including Cole and Bob Younger and Frank and Jesse James.

In the Coffeyville raid, four of the five bandits were killed by armed citizens, while the sole survivor of the gang, Emmett Dalton, was captured and survived an amazing 23 wounds from bullets and buckshot pellets. Unfortunately, the “death score” was 4 to 4: The gang murdered the town marshal and three citizens, at least two of whom were unarmed and helpless.

We have space here to discuss one more such incident, not far in time or space from the Meeker case we are focusing on. In September of 1893, in Delta, Colo., a trio of armed robbers hit the Farmers and Merchants Bank. When cashier A.T. Blachly did not deliver the money quickly enough to suit them, one of the robbers shot him in the neck, killing him instantly. The robbers grabbed as much money as they could and rushed to the door. Assistant cashier H. H. Wolbert grabbed a revolver, but the robbers took him at gunpoint and ordered him to drop the gun. He did. The robbers made their exit on horseback.

The local newspaper *The Sun* reported at the time, “Men rushed for revolvers and guns and then ran toward the bank. Among them was W. R. Simpson, a young hardware merchant, whose shop was across the street from the bank. He picked up a rifle and

started up the street. As the robbers came out of the alley and crossed the street, Simpson fired, and one of the robbers fell, the top of his head being fairly taken off by the ball. Simpson then ran to the alley and fired after the other two fleeing men. He shot twice, killing first another man and then his horse. The second man was also struck in the head. The remaining survivor escaped across the river.”

“He describes them as a ‘Junior Wild Bunch’ who had been entranced by stories of Butch and Sundance’s derring-do and rich plunder from the banks and trains they had robbed.”

No survivable wounds anywhere in that one. Three people dead, one helpless innocent victim, and two of the three men responsible for his murder. “Good Guys 2, Bad Guys 1.”

Lessons

There is an old saying that holds true: “The younger serpent has the strongest venom.” Police who have dealt with violent juvenile offenders know it to be true. They may not yet have developed

compassion or sympathy. They may not have yet felt intimations of mortality and may think they are immortal and invulnerable. And they may not yet know what they are doing.

Modeling on Robert Leroy Parker, also known as Butch Cassidy, and Harry Alonzo Longabaugh aka the Sundance Kid, they had missed a cornerstone of Cassidy’s success as a robber: He had been scrupulous not to hurt anyone or even fire a gun if he didn’t absolutely have to. History is clear that Cassidy never killed anyone until his last day on Earth when he and Longabaugh shot it out with Bolivian soldiers, inflicting some fatalities, and then went out in a mutual death pact. It is generally accepted that “Butch” shot “Sundance” in the forehead and then shot himself through the temple.

Virtually everyone who studied the Meeker Bank Robbery Shootout concluded that if George Harris hadn’t fired those first two shots inside the bank to intimidate the cashier, no one would have recognized that there was a bank robbery in progress ... the armed citizen posse would not have been alerted and had time to gather up outside ... and the robbers would have probably escaped with the money, and with their lives, with no shots fired and no blood spilled on either side.

Ironically, the amateur robbers had left the sack of stolen money behind in the bank.

Don’t steal from those who desperately need to keep what you are trying to steal. Today, we are all told, “Let the thieves take the bank’s money, it’s insured.” It wasn’t insured then. FDIC did not come into being until 1934,

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almost 40 years after the Meeker incident. The “Junior Wild Bunch” wasn’t just stealing the bank’s money; they were stealing the money of the innocent depositors of Meeker, who needed that money to feed their children and keep roofs over their heads.

Motivation Matters

When armed citizens fight back against dangerous criminals, often a single hero will emerge to lead the “fight for right.” In the Meeker incident we focused on here, it was the citizen Simp Hart, who killed two-thirds of the would-be murderers who died that day. In the Coffeyville fight, a majority of the Bad Guys were put down by John Kloehr, a cool-headed sharpshooter with his Winchester rifle. In a 2017 article on the *True West Blog*, Mark Boardman writes, “In some remembrances 14 years later, Kloehr claimed to have been the man who killed four of the robbers and wounded another. He did kill Grat Dalton and probably fired fatal shots into two others, but many guns were firing. Kloehr was a hero, but not the only one.” In Northfield, by contrast, the credit for stop-

ping the bad guys seems to be equally spread between multiple courageous, straight-shooting citizens.

In Closing

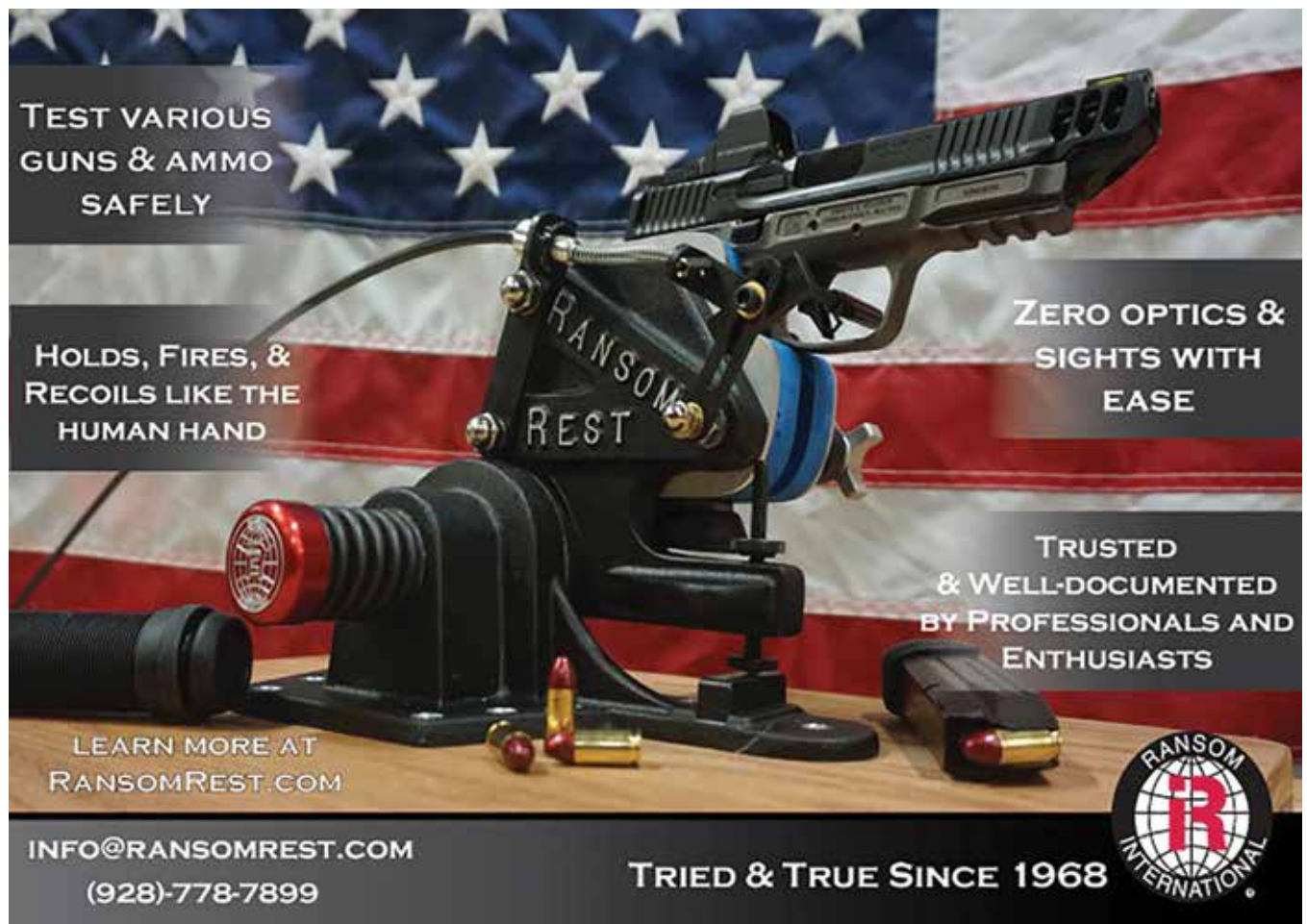
Apologies if the names sound confusing. Each of the three armed robbers who died had at least two names that they went by. The historical accounts vary as to their names. But if I had labeled them “Perpetrators 1, 2 and 3,” it wouldn’t have been historically correct. In the source materials, robber Jim Shirly’s name is variously spelled with and without an “e.”

I realize I am writing for a gun magazine, and herewith apologize for not having more details for the readers on the firearms involved. None of the historical resources seems to have that information. There is a small museum in Meeker, Colo., which has an exhibit related to this incident. I apologize again for not having been there, but pictures I’ve seen of that display show the iconic guns of the period: Colt single-action revolvers and Winchester lever-action rifles. Accounts indicate that only handguns were used by the Bad Guys; the long guns were deployed by at least some of the Good Guys. Do we need to mention that if you know a gunfight is coming up, you would rather have a long gun than a short one? Okay then: point already made and, I presume, taken.

Some of those Colts and Winchesters are on display at the White River Museum in Meeker. See MeekerColorado.com.

A final point. Suppose an anti-gunner reads the above and sneers, “That’s all from olden days. Where were your vaunted armed citizens when the North Hollywood Bank Robbery went down and the two perpetrators shot more than a dozen people before the cops finally killed them?”

My answer would be, “The potential rescuing citizens at that Bank of America incident were in Southern California, a quarter of a century before the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark Bruen decision, in a time and place where the only private citizens who could get carry permits were millionaires and movie stars, none of whom were present. You see, for the real first responders — citizens immediately present when the deadly danger breaks out — to be able to deal with it, they need immediate access to firearms. If there had been armed citizens in that bank on that day in 1997, when suspect Matasareanu was emptying his illegally possessed full auto AK47 into the ATM, as soon as his partner Phillips looked away, a competent armed citizen could have drawn and shot them both down ... and none of those innocent victims would have been shot.” 



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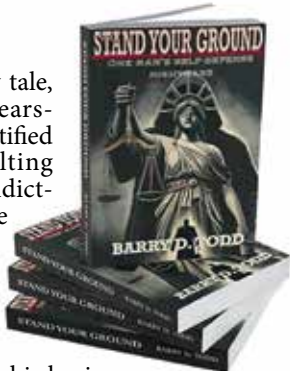
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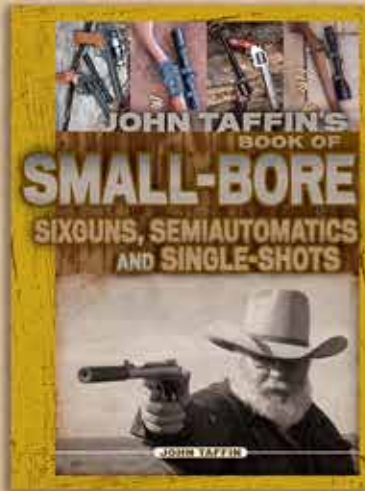
You can deal with that case later.

The primer punch is adjustable and indexes using the bottom of the case instead of the top of the rim — that provides precise and repeatable primer depth. MSRP: \$174.95.

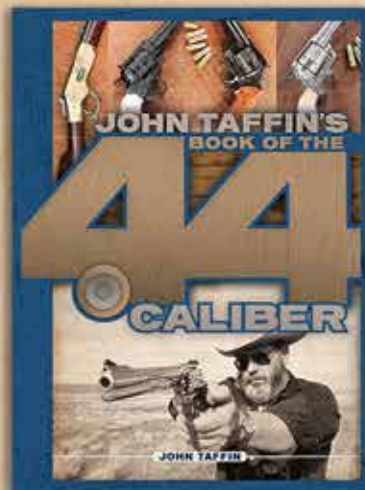
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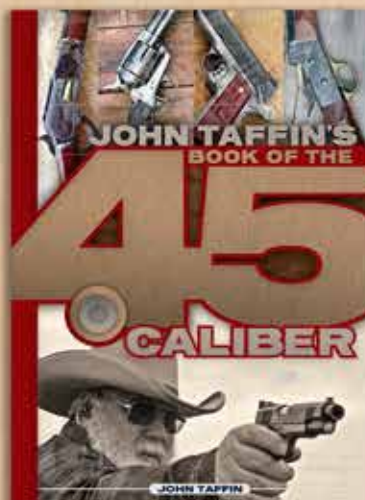
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GUN RIGHTS

DAVID CODREA

HOLD THAT TIGER



In April, I filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the Department of Justice seeking documents related to its restoration of Second Amendment rights recognition for Hollywood A-listers Mel Gibson and nine other citizens. Because it's so easy to end up on the "prohibited persons" list (including the innocent pleading out to avoid great expense and threatened draconian punishment if they lose), it seemed in the interests of gun owners to know what criteria were used and who is likely to be eligible for consideration.

Among the records sought are all those "reviewed by the Attorney General for each individual listed in the filing; All records that each individual submitted to receive relief [and] All other records not submitted by the list of individuals, but relied upon by the Attorney General in establishing that 'each individual will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety and that the granting of the relief to each individual would not be contrary to the public interest.'"

We'll see if we have the information I'm looking for by the time this article goes to press.

Can't Be Trusted ...

Regardless of the government's response, if anything, one truism will remain unchallengeable, an observation I made years ago that induced a reader to make an entry in the online Urban Dictionary that he named "Codrea's Law":

"Anyone who can't be trusted with a gun can't be trusted without a custodian."

It's true, and it's not just guns. There are people whose behaviors have proven they can't be trusted with knives. Or blunt objects. Or fists. Remember that the greatest mass murders in this country have ostensibly been committed with box cutters you can get at any office or shipping supply store (9/11), with

fertilizer and fuel oil (Oklahoma City bombing), and with a bit of gasoline and a match (do an internet search for "Happyland fire").

Anything can be a weapon. Bottom line: You can't trust violent people with peaceable ones.

Predator's Nature

The trust idea had its genesis years earlier, from an interesting passage in the indispensable desk reference *Gun Control*, a 1973 classic by the late administrative law judge, author and lecturer Robert J. Kukla on the history of the 20th-century citizen disarmament movement. It's now out of print, but a limited number of copies in varying conditions are still available on Amazon. If you don't grab one before they're gone, it's your loss.

Kukla relayed the story of a 1964 CBS hit piece on guns (how little things have changed since then!). A violent career felon had been conditionally released from a federal penitentiary and went on to murder a police officer. Naturally, gun laws were blamed by both a police official and the warden.

"Can you visualize CBS-Television calmly interviewing a zookeeper who had recently released a ravenous tiger that promptly devoured the first person it encountered?" Kukla asked readers, drawing an obvious logical parallel. "Suppose the zookeeper replied: 'Tigers are vicious flesh-eaters. This one had been vicious all of his life, and the first thing he would think of when he gets out of his cage is to tear some person to shreds.'"

There are some behaviors so aberrant, some crimes so vicious, and some consciences so amoral that it can never be safe to allow a congenital predator unfettered access to a potential victim pool and not expect that innocents will be attacked. The Aesop tale of the scorpion and the frog comes to mind; the predator will do what's in its nature.

The Flip Side

Conversely, if someone is not anger management-challenged and homicidal, what's the point of a life-

time ban on a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution? With the Supreme Court's Bruen decision standard of text, history and tradition at the time of ratification, no one can make the case that disarming DIY home décor, crafts and recipe maven Martha Stewart for lying to the feds about some stock trades made the world a safer place (even though she is a Democrat and supports the party of "gun control").

Then there are abuses that have arisen under the Lautenberg Amendment, which turned misdemeanor domestic violence charges into lifetime prohibitions.

"Lautenberg Gun Ban Racking up the Horror Stories," *Gun Owners of America* documented back in 1998, citing examples such as "A wife tears her husband's pocket during an argument. A daughter throws keys at her mom — and misses. Both 'assailants' are arrested, fingerprinted and booked."

Then we have temporary prohibited persons, those disarmed under so-called "Red Flag Laws," stripped of a supposedly unalienable right without so much as being charged with a crime, let alone convicted. That madness evokes nothing so much as the ludicrously despotic Queen of Hearts in Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice in Wonderland*: "No, no!" said the Queen. "Sentence first — verdict afterwards."

So much for a bedrock principle of American jurisprudence, the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. And that can only happen after full due process.

As for the proven guilty? It's up to those who have been proven guilty of violently victimizing others to prove they're no longer a danger and no longer need to be segregated from society. Until the laws recognize that reality, expect tigers to behave like the predators they are.





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2K11 Kimber Mfg. Inc.

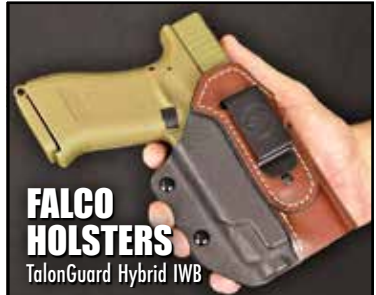
The 2K11 from Kimber debuts with standard and target configuration models and each is chambered in 9mm as well as .45 ACP. The 2K11 features an external extractor for increased reliability and durability and a Type III hard anodized aluminum grip module. The 2K11's improved internal geometry enhances the reliability of feeding high-capacity magazines. The Kimber signature GT Trigger breaks at a consistent 3.5 lbs. Both models come with three magazines and one C&H optic mounting plate. Target models have a ported slide, adjustable rear target sight and Kimber exclusive Stan Chen Customs competition magwell. MSRP: \$1,995. For more info: (888) 243-4522, KimberAmerica.com

T8 ATHENA LE BOOTS

Garment Tactical

Expanding its T8 collection, Garment Tactical's T8 Athena LE Boots for women are breathable, lightweight and flexible. The narrow heel, shorter Achilles area and increased arch support accommodate a woman's higher instep. A dual-density EVA provides shock absorption and differentiates support zones. The 8" weather-resistant textile upper provides a polishable surface, while offering durability and protection. T8 Athena LE boots are available in women's sizes 4-11, in regular and wide widths, in black or Coyote Tan. MSRP: \$165.

For more info: (844) 427-6668, GarmentTactical.com



FALCO HOLSTERS

TalonGuard Hybrid IWB

Available in three models, FALCO's TalonGuard Hybrid IWB holsters combine Italian leather with a Kydex insert that covers the trigger guard on both sides. The A910 holster features a Kydex TalonGuard enclosed by leather, while the A911 and the A911 L combine a Kydex TalonGuard with an exterior of half leather and half Kydex. The holsters' open bottom allows for threaded barrels and easy maintenance. The FALCO stainless steel belt clip offers a secure fit for belt widths of 1.5" and 2". MSRP: \$109.99 for the A911. For more info: (800) 490-7147, FALCOHolsters.com



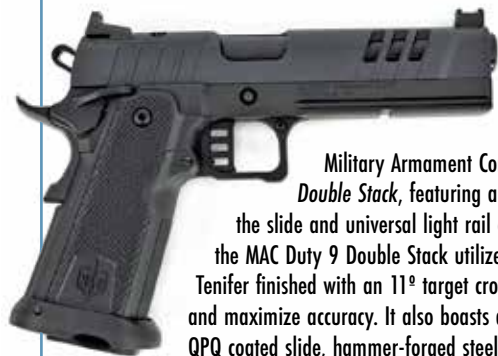
DT47 Bond Arms

Bond Arms' limited edition DT47 honors the victory of Donald J. Trump, the 47th commander in chief. Chambered in .45 Colt/.410, the DT47 features a 4.25" flat-sided barrel, engraving on both sides and an ergonomic B6 grip. It has a stainless steel single-barrel and frame, patented rebounding hammer, retracting firing pin, cross bolt safety and spring-loaded locking lever. MSRP: \$645.47. For more info: (817) 573-4445, BondArms.com



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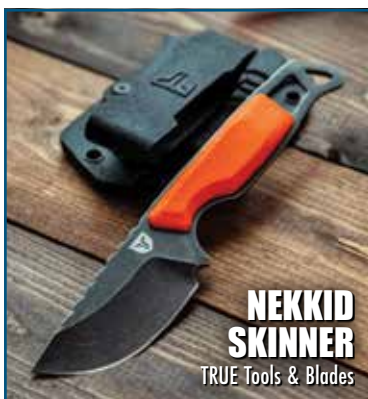
MAC DUTY 9 DOUBLE STACK

Military Armament Corp.

Military Armament Corp. introduces the *MAC Duty 9 Double Stack*, featuring a factory RMR pattern optic cut on the slide and universal light rail on the frame. Chambered in 9mm, the *MAC Duty 9 Double Stack* utilizes a 5" bull barrel that is QPQ Tenifer finished with an 11° target crown to keep recoil at a minimum and maximize accuracy. It also boasts a hammer-forged steel Tenifer QPQ coated slide, hammer-forged steel black Cerakote frame and barrel, skeleton hammer and more. Comes with two 17-round mags and an optics plate system. MSRP: \$1,099.99. For more info: (865) 604-6894, MilArmamentCorp.com

KOLOTL Columbia River Knife & Tool

Named after the Aztec god of fire and lightning, the *CRKT Xolotl* combines mythical inspiration and modern materials for a durable, high-performance fixed-blade knife. Part of the Forged By War Program, the *Xolotl* features a 4.53" SK-5 steel spear-point blade with a dagger grind that's sharp on both sides, Veff Serrations for increased cutting performance, a textured G10 handle and a durable thermoplastic sheath that offers multiple mounting options. The *Xolotl* weighs 5.7 oz., and is 9.88" long overall. MSRP: \$98. For more info: (503) 685-5015, CRKT.com



**NEKKID
SKINNER**
TRUE Tools & Blades

TRUE introduces the *NEKKID SKINNER* with a traditional Skinner-blade design crafted from 3Cr13 stainless steel and finished with a black oxide stonewash. The full-tang skeletonized construction transitions smoothly into the handle, featuring removable TraxGrip scales. The handle provides superior grip retention, while the thermoplastic rubber (TPR) adds extra comfort and impact resistance. MSRP: \$29.99. For more info: (800) 255-6061, TRUE.acgbrands.com

WOMEN'S TRAILBREAKER GTX

LaCrosse Footwear

The *Women's Trailbreaker GTX* footwear is made of suede with a lightweight abrasion-resistant polyester upper for durability and GORE-TEX 100% waterproof, breathable lining for protection from the elements. A rubber mudguard provides abrasion resistance. The thick, cushioning EVA midsole adds insulation and shock absorption underfoot while multi-directional non-loading lugs provide increased surface area for stability on uneven terrain. Available in women's sizes 5–10 with half sizes. MSRP: About \$199.99. For more info: (800) 323-2668, LacrosseFootwear.com



PROJECT 1

Wilson Combat



Wilson Combat's *Project 1* is the first release in the Division 77 series. Offered in 9mm, the compact-size aluminum X-Frame sports Reliability Enhanced frame rails and TRAK treatment on the front strap/backstrap. It sports a 5" barrel with a Concealment Bullet Proof trigger (3.5 to 4.5-lb. pull) and is pre-cut for direct mounting of a variety of popular carry optics. The ported slide paired with an integrated compensator minimizes recoil and the cover plate features a dovetail rear sight and an integrated firing pin stop for a movement-free iron sight platform. OAL is 8.7"; weight is 33.8 oz. empty. MSRP: \$3,995. For more info: (800) 955-4856, WilsonCombat.com

OMEGA 9MM

Elite Tactical Systems Group

Elite Tactical Systems (ETS) Group released the *Omega 9mm*, a 17-round ETS magazine for the SIG SAUER P320. The *Omega* magazine features hardened steel feed lips for durability, a patent-pending Omega Joint ensuring structural strength and consistent operation, military-grade Teflon coating for corrosion resistance, a design 50% lighter than standard steel magazines and 100% drop-free reliability for quick and smooth reloads. MSRP: \$25.99. For more info: (855) 887-5452, ETSGroup.us



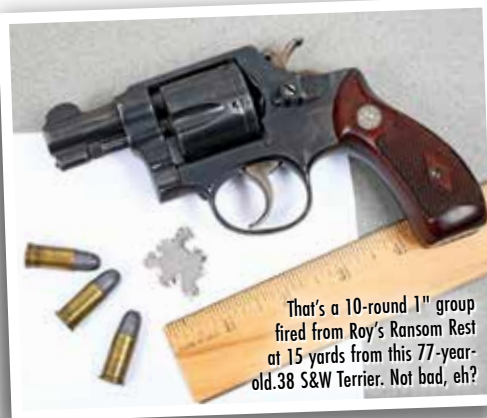
TAURUS 650

Taurus USA

The *Taurus 650* is a true shrouded hammer, five-shot revolver chambered in .357

Magnum. The steel or stainless steel frame provides the durability needed for both daily carry and extended shooting sessions. The DAO trigger offers a smooth and consistent pull. It is chambered to handle up to .357 Magnum and can also fire .38 Spl. and .38 Spl. +P loads. The serrated blade front sight reduces glare and allows for quick accuracy in all lighting conditions. MSRP: \$454.99. For more info: (800) 327-3776, TaurusUSA.com





didn't break the bank. This one, vintage 1948, was a bit over \$600, but some go well over \$1,000 or more for minty ones. It's tough to nail it down, but you might consider it a transition from the old school I-Frames to the later J-Frames. Mine weighs right at 17 oz., with a 2" barrel and round butt. If you notice it has a shorter cylinder than a Model 36 J-Frame in .38 Special and is much too short to ever chamber a .38 Special cartridge. Indeed, a .38 Special won't even fit in the cylinder window! It's not just a Model 36 with a short cylinder installed.

By 1950, the J-Frame Model 36 production was ramping up with a larger cylinder window to accommodate the longer .38 Special cylinder. Note the differences between the Terrier and the Model 36 in the picture. Note also the rounded half-moon front sight on the Terrier, while the Model 36 in the photo has the ramped front. Mine was made in 1955, so it is a very early gun.

The Terrier also has the famous "Five Screw" construction, with four screws securing the side plate and a single screw in front of the trigger guard holding the plunger and spring for the cylinder bolt. That final screw was deleted soon after the post war models came out and eventually the screw at the top of the side plate was deleted too, leaving us with today's "three-screw" models.

The Real Secret

I tend to shoot even the rare guns I might encounter, and my Terrier is no exception. It checked out 100% fine, so I grabbed some 50+ year old classic 146-grain RNL .38 S&W ammo I had, and after a bit of test firing, found this little gun can really shoot. Also, the ammo delivered right at 600 fps over my chronograph, which is a bit higher than I thought it would be. Intrigued by the accuracy, I dug out my Ransom Rest, bolted in the J-Frame round butt inserts and clamped the Terrier in since it fit well enough.



A 1955 vintage Model 36, at top, with a vintage 1958 Model 12 Airweight and the lovely little Terrier in .38 S&W hiding below. Note the cylinder differences between the 36 and the Terrier and the bigger size of the K-Frame Model 12.

Believe it or not, at 15 yards, the Tiny Terror put 10 rounds into that tidy 1" group. Note how it's well-rounded, too, meaning the Ransom Rest was dialed in neatly and the gun shoots very consistently, with no stringing. Much to my surprise, that 50-year-old Remington ammo (price on the box was \$4.95!) shot amazingly well. This proves, yet again, how small-frame revolvers shoot just fine, and if people complain about their accuracy, it's the shooter, not the gun.

Some don't realize the .38 S&W has a bore size of 0.360" as opposed to the 0.357" of the .38 Special. So, .38 bullets tend to sort of slide down the bore of a .38 S&W, and accuracy almost always suffers if you use .357 bullets to reload for the .38 S&W. I have ordered some properly sized 148-grain Wadcutters in .360 to reload, and will fill you in on how they work out later.

It's never too late to start your own adventure with these little guns. From late 1800s, .32 break-tops to modern cutting-edge designs, the pocket-sized wheelgun still holds its own and remains as delightful as, well,  messing around in boats.



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ROY HUNTINGTON

THE INSIDER™

S&W'S TOO-TOUGH TERRIER!



A bit of history in the flesh. A 3rd. Model Safety Hammerless .38 S&W (1896) at top, the vintage 1948 Terrier, also in .38 S&W next and a .38 Safety Hammerless 5th Model (snubbie) in .38 S&W, produced from 1907–1940. Roy's sample here was made around 1915.



AND OTHER FUN THINGS

Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing — absolutely nothing — half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.” The Water Rat to the Mole, in Kenneth Grahame’s justly famous *Wind In The Willows* children’s stories, published in 1908. Except, at least to

me, they aren’t children’s stories at all, but stories to make us all think. Oh, and kids happen to like them too. But what Water Rat says about boats strikes a chord for me, for I’ve squandered untold thousands on various sailboats over the years, yet still agree — with great enthusiasm, I might add — that messing about in boats is first rate.

The interesting thing to me, though, is exactly the same thing applies to guns if you have

that gene — and we do, right? Fussing in the reloading room, plinking with your favorite .22, cherishing a family heirloom single action or just idling an afternoon wandering the aisles of a local gun show — it’s all worth doing and as satisfying as messing about in boats if you ask me.

For me, the “funnest” things — as my daughter used to say — are revolvers, and especially small frame models. It’s a weakness, alas, I’ve suffered with my entire life, and I can keep track of decades by simply nosing through the list of modestly sized round guns that have followed me home. From minuscule M-Frame Ladysmiths (please, oh please S&W, resurrect them!) and the copy of it from Rossi in the ’60s called the Princess, to today’s tidy sixguns, they all appeal and draw my eye. Perhaps yours too?

The Terrier

The gun in question here is a bucket list one for me. I’ve searched many years for a nice, smooth and shootable Terrier in .38 S&W that

Tidy and appealing, the Terrier’s old school looks and high build quality can make one hard to resist.



A .38 Special 158-grain RNFP on left, a 146-grain Remington .38 S&W next, followed by a standard 148-grain target wadcutter in .38 Special. The Special cartridge won’t fit in the Terrier’s cylinder window.

Continued on page 72

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